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ABSTRACT

The International Working Group on Education met in Florence, Italy, in June 2000. Participants came from 28 institutions representing 10 international agencies or institutions, 1 foundation, and 14 bilateral agencies. This publication is a summary of the proceedings of that meeting. Meeting participants reviewed progress on the Education for All Forum, examined the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on societies and their education systems, described progress on the implementation of sectorwide approaches to development assistance, and discussed issues related to improving the quality of learning. Proceedings were divided into three themes. Theme 1 gave the representatives of donor agencies the opportunity to report on any significant changes in policy since their previous meeting. Theme 2 concentrated on improving the quality of learning and divided into four sessions: (1) a session on what constitutes quality learning; (2) a session on quality and early-childhood development; (3) a session on organizing local support for learning; and (4) a session on learning and knowledge-sharing in education and the role of evaluation research and assessment. Theme 3 examined sectorwide approaches to education development assistance. Appended are a list of participants, a detailed program of the sessions, and a list of papers produced for the meeting. (WFA)

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ED 480 260

A report from the IWGE

Quality and learning: perspectives from development co-operation

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Meeting of the International Working Group on Education (IWGE)
Florence, 13-16 June 2000

EA 031 713

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International Institute for Educational Planning

Quality and learning: perspectives from development co-operation

A report from the IWGE

Meeting of the
International Working Group on Education (IWGE)
Florence, 13-16 June 2000

Paris 2001
UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning

This document is the summary of discussions of the 2000 International Working Group on Education (IWGE) meeting. The views and opinions expressed in this volume are those of individual participants in the meeting and should in no way be attributed to UNESCO, the IIEP or to any of the agencies which are members of the Working Group.

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Preface

As a newcomer to the IWGE, I found this an absorbing experience. The chief education professionals of most of the major bilateral and multilateral donors come together for three days of intensive and wide-ranging discussion to an agenda created by a small, informal planning committee (whose members also fund the core cost of the meeting). Their views are personal, but naturally they also reflect the latest thinking within their respective organizations.

The result is a fascinating insight into the 'state-of-the-art' thinking of most of the world's donor agencies across the field of education. At this meeting we reviewed, among other important matters, progress on Education for All following the 2000 Dakar meeting, the major threat posed to societies and their education systems by HIV and AIDS, progress on the implementation of sector-wide approaches to development assistance, and the broad issue of quality of learning.

But throughout the three days of the meeting, I was conscious of the much wider dimension given to the proceedings by the fact that this meeting, in various forms and in a wide range of locations, has been taking place approximately every two years since the 1970s, when it began as the Bellagio Group. The event gains enormously from the continuity of attendance that enables a small core of participants to carry into the meetings their knowledge and recollection of many previous sessions reaching back over a decade or more. Thus, the meeting must be seen as a part of an ongoing and developing tradition, in which content, approach, participation and a range of subtler issues are constantly questioned and revised.

This is emphatically not one of those international meetings where the focus is on the 'business done in the corridors' while voices drone on in plenary sessions, only half heard by those who have come with their own agendas. I was forcibly struck throughout by the intensive nature of the contributions, the care with which participants listened to each other and responded, the lack of pre-packaged jargon and stock response, the clear desire to learn from others' experiences and ideas. It was a truly satisfying and demanding experience.

After the traditional opening, where some of the participants brought others up to date on the most recent developments in their agencies, the meeting turned to issues of quality: what do we mean by quality of learning? How do we define quality in terms of early childhood development? How do we try to ensure quality in the organization of local support for learning, how does the management of information and knowledge affect quality in the delivery of assistance, and how do research and assessment feed back into the process of delivery?

By the middle of the second day the meeting was ready to return to an issue discussed two years ago at the 1998 IWGE: the implementation across countries and continents of the sector-wide approach (SWA) which, increasingly, donor institutions are developing in partnership with governments and each other. Practical issues included the training of agency staff for this much broader approach, and the creation/operation of inter-agency groups and networks.

By the third morning the meeting was ready to discuss the special issue of the impact of HIV/AIDS on whole countries, systems and schools. The disturbing conclusions of this remarkable session are near the end of this report and are specially commended to all readers.

This report, drafted by a former member of the IWGE, Roger Iredale, on behalf of the Secretariat, was circulated for comment to members of the Steering Committee before being printed and distributed to the participants and to a much wider audience. In reading it you should bear in mind that these are personal views and do not represent official policies as such. Nevertheless I think you will find it a valuable tool and a fascinating insight into thinking behind many of the crucially important challenges in assistance to education today.

Gudmund Hernes,
Director,
International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris

Contents

Preface v

Composition of Planning Committee 11

Abbreviations used in this report 12

Introduction 15

Preamble and keynote address 19

Theme 1. Recent trends in education aid policies and practices 21

Theme 2. Improving the quality of learning 45
What makes quality of learning? 45
Quality and early childhood development 55
Organizing local support for learning 59
The role of information and knowledge management for quality improvement 65
    Learning and knowledge sharing in education 65
    The role of evaluation research and assessment 70

Theme 3. Sector-wide approaches to education development assistance 81

Practical issues 1. Training of agency staff 93

Practical issues 2. Inter-agency groups and networks 101

Special session: HIV/AIDS and education 107

Conclusions and recommendations 119

Appendix A: List of participants 123

Appendix B: Detailed programme of sessions 129

Appendix C: List of papers produced for the IWGE meeting 133

9

Composition of Planning Committee

The International Working Group on Education (IWGE) is an informal group of aid agencies and foundations which come together at regular intervals to discuss issues of common interest relating to international co-operation in the field of education. At present, the Planning Committee of the IWGE is composed of representatives of the following agencies:

- Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)
- Department for International Development (DFID)
- International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)
- Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

The Secretariat of the International Working Group on Education is provided by the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP).

Abbreviations used in this report

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific (countries)
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AFD	Agence française de développement (France)
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CBO	community-based organization
CIDA	Canada International Development Agency
CSO	civil society organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
DANIDA	Danish International Development Authority
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DSE	German Foundation for International Development (Deutsche Stiftung Für Internationale Entwicklung)
EAS	Education Advisory Service (World Bank)
ECCE	early childhood care and education
EDF	European Development Fund
EFA	Education for All
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FINNIDA	Finnish International Development Agency
GNP	Gross national product
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Co-operation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit)

HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)
IDA	International Development Association (of the World Bank)
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO)
IWGE	International Working Group on Education
JICA	Japanese International Co-operation Agency
MAE	Ministère des Affaires étrangères (France)
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	non-governmental organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency of Development Co-operation
NUFFIC	Netherlands Organization for International Co-operation in Higher Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Sida	Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency
SWA	sector-wide approach
TA	technical assistance
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Introduction

The International Working Group on Education met near Florence, Italy, from 14 to 16 June, 2000, hosted by the UNICEF office in Florence. Participants came from a total of 28 institutions, representing 10 international agencies or institutions, one foundation, and 14 bilateral agencies. Compared with the previous meeting in Feldafing in 1998, one or two agencies were missing, while five others which could not attend last time, were duly represented at the Florence session. Agency-wise, the composition of the Working Group was very similar to that of the previous meeting. Furthermore, over half the participants had attended the previous meeting two years earlier.

The IWGE is an informal meeting of the key representatives concerned with the development of education policies in the donor agencies. The group meets about every two years for an intensive professional interchange on current policy issues, and the informality of the sessions ensures that wide-ranging discussions take place in which the participants express their own personal views as well as those of their agencies. A list of those who participated in the 1998 meeting appears at Appendix A.

The IWGE has been meeting since the early 1980s, when it took over the functions of the earlier Bellagio Group which had also acted as a forum for high-level discussions of policies in aid to education. Its meetings are organized and supported professionally by the IIEP in Paris, which acts as the secretariat of the Working Group and is responsible, with the Group's Ad Hoc Planning Committee, for the production of this report.

A detailed programme is provided in Appendix B. **Theme 1** gave the representatives of donor agencies the opportunity to outline any significant changes of course in policy since the previous meeting. On this occasion, the representatives did not attempt an exhaustive outline of their agencies' current work and structure, sticking only to points of difference which they thought other members of the group should be aware of.

Theme 2 concentrated on improving the quality of learning, and fell into four sections led by different individuals or panels. A generic session on *What makes quality of learning?* led into a second session which homed in on one particular level of education under the title, *Quality and early childhood development. Organizing local support for learning* provided an opportunity for a review of the growing concern of donors to ensure community participation in larger-scale educational developments. Finally, the theme took up an issue that was initially opened up at the 1998 session on the importance of sharing information within and between organizations under two sub-themes, *learning and knowledge sharing in education* and *the role of evaluation research and assessment.*

The meeting then moved on to **Theme 3**, which continued a major theme of the previous 1998 meeting: sector-wide approaches to education development assistance. At the 1998 meeting interest had focused on the Code of Conduct which had been the subject of intensive discussions in previous months, and this time attention moved to two practical sessions, one on the *training of agency staff* and the other on the building of *interagency groups and networks.*

Interposed between these two sessions were two very important *ad hoc* sessions, the first an informal and unrecorded evening review of the February 2000 Education for All Forum held in Dakar, Senegal, and the second a special session on the implications for future educational work and structures of HIV/AIDS. This latter session is recorded near the end of the report in a special section devoted to that topic.

The text of this report is also available on the IIEP website (www.unesco.org/iiep) with links to copies of some of the papers presented at the meeting. The titles of these appear both against the names of their presenters and in Appendix C.

The final session offered, as usual, an opportunity for a number of factual topics to be introduced and explored, and for making concrete suggestions for further action of the Working Group.

These sessions are summarized in the body of the main text. Except where the name of the presenter already appears on the Programme in Appendix B, statements are not assigned to specific, named individuals, nor are the discussions necessarily presented in the order in which they took place. The report attempts to draw out main issues and themes in an order that is logical rather than chronological, using the presentations and discussions to provide a source of information for the general reader as well as for those who attended the conference and their agency colleagues.

Preamble to Theme 1

Keynote address

Gudmund Hernes, IIEP
Opening address

This particular meeting of the IWGE — as in earlier years — is something of a privileged moment for its participants, for it offers them an unusual and enviable opportunity to participate in an exchange of professional information between a number of key institutions engaged in the process of development. It is a moment when those present, like a tribe of nomads coming together for a brief instant, are still a part of and fully involved in the working life of exchange and dialogue; but at the same time they have escaped from the demands of their immediate professional environment, with its multifaceted claims on their attention. As with Christmas, each approaches the occasion with solid notions of what it is all about, high expectations of what may come to pass, and yet no clear idea of what will actually happen when the moment of truth arrives!

With the celebrated Education for All (EFA) Forum in Dakar having taken place only a matter of weeks previously, it is natural to expect that the EFA and all its implications will permeate the discussions. As a topic EFA does not appear on the agenda, except as an informal evening session, but its influence should extend throughout all the discussions.

Some of the topics provide opportunities for the IWGE to carry forward new ideas and new practical proposals. At a practical level the concept of training for agency staff was raised at the 1998 IWGE meeting and will be considered further as discussions proceed.

The present meeting chose Florence as its location. One can hardly forget that the city lay at the heart of the Renaissance, when a group of no more than some 15,000 people shaped the whole future western world, its art, politics, ideas and perceptions of reality. Parts of it remain in all of us to the present time, deeply influencing the contemporary world and our understanding of it. Florence was the birthplace of new concepts of philosophy and education; its spirit inevitably challenges any conference on education, conducted within its aura, to ask whether there are still things to be learned from the city's history.

Perhaps the most important message from Renaissance Florence to the twenty-first century is that humanity is not about being but becoming. Renaissance Florence came to value the potential for self-transformation, the development of all human faculties, the development of broad knowledge, sensitivity and completeness. The essence was to live in the world, learning from it and seeking the common elements that we all share with each other. Measurement of true worth came to be perceived in terms of what you achieve for others rather than what you are in yourself. The pursuit of excellence lay at the heart of learning and self-development. In Verocchio's workshop Leonardo demonstrated as an apprentice a mastery that exceeded the powers of his master, who is reputed to have broken his brushes as he recognized the brilliance of his pupil. In doing this, Verocchio set a simple standard for true educationists who take pleasure in the discovered superiority of the pupil over the teacher.

Theme 1

Recent trends in education aid policies and practices

Some basic figures about aid

by Gabriel Carron, IIEP

It is clear that aid has not only failed to increase during the 1990s but has declined substantially. The figure of \$47 billion for 1997 represents a significant fall from the figure of \$60 billion in 1992.[1] This drop represents a fall not only in absolute terms, but also in terms of countries' GNP percentage from 0.33 to a low of 0.22. Though the figures for 1998 indicate a slight rise from \$47 billion to nearly \$52 billion (and a GNP percentage from 0.22 to 0.24), the question has to be asked whether this is the beginning of a long-term trend, or simply a 'blip'. The 1999 figures, when they become available, will begin to provide an answer to this crucial question.

Whatever the outcome of new figures as they are released, it is clear that there has been a significant decrease in effort among DAC members. Moreover, there are still big differences as between countries, with most falling below the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent. Denmark, Norway, Netherlands and Sweden lead with percentages above the pledged 0.7 per cent, while the two largest donors in absolute terms, namely Japan and the USA, lag far behind at 0.3 and 0.1 per cent respectively.

In terms of bilateral ODA commitments specifically for education, some \$5 billion were provided in 1996, which is substantially lower than the \$6 billion in 1995, though that figure was itself significantly higher than figures for the preceding five years.

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[1] Figures are based on recent DAC/OECD reports on Development Co-operation.

How much of this is spent on basic education — the main emphasis of the EFA initiative — is almost impossible to assess, mainly because of the problems of definition. Australia, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, countries which give high priority to basic education, give figures for their investments in basic education which vary between 4.7 per cent and 2.5 per cent of their total bilateral aid. But the overall impression is that the sums of money devoted to supporting it are often less than 2 per cent, or even 1 per cent, of total aid. The question can therefore be raised: is the stated emphasis on basic education rhetoric or reality?

General discussion

It was noticeable at the previous IWGE that most agencies claimed basic education to be a priority for their programmes. In Africa there is apparently no shortage of money for basic education, as donor after donor scramble to fund it. One new problem of measurement will arise from debt relief, where counterpart funding will be widely allocated to social sectors, and especially education. Frequently, in future this money will sit in the national budget and will not show up in aid statistics unless a special effort is made to track and measure it. There is an urgent need to obtain a sense of what is happening to education budgets in Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs).

There are further difficulties over the quality of DAC data. Some agencies are finding this a major challenge in determining the extent of overall support to basic education. There is a real feeling that the data provided significantly underestimate the real support going into this level. But there is a further problem at country level, since it is reasonable to raise substantial doubts about the capacity of countries to absorb more than is being offered at the present time. Can they provide the management capability to develop basic education fast enough to use the funds creatively and effectively?

Overview of *Education for All* Forum held at Dakar, February 2000, by Chair of Forum Steering Committee

One hundred and eighty-two countries were represented at Dakar, which hosted the largest meeting yet held under this initiative. Given the huge numbers of participating organizations and their diversity, the Framework for Action was agreed with surprising ease. The Forum closed with cautious optimism about achieving the agreed targets. Key issues included:

1. The Framework for Action was adopted by the Forum.
2. Very strong moral commitments to targets were made by the participating organizations, possibly because of their realization that it would be unacceptable to appear at yet another Forum in the future and again admit that targets had not been met.
3. There was a general admission that the goals set at Jomtien have not been met, though there may have been some quantitative achievements.
4. Exclusion was consistently mentioned throughout, with reference not just to education, but to exclusion from society at large.
5. Related to this, the issue of people's marginalization *within* societies is a worrying trend. Often there were references to the need for inclusive education and a cross-sectoral approach to education, and its links with poverty alleviation were clearly stated on numerous occasions: education must not be seen in isolation.
6. Many developing-country representatives spoke of the centrality of political will and the need for adequate support from third parties when this was present.
7. Support for the education of girls and women was very high on the agenda.
8. Similarly, HIV/AIDS was under the spotlight.
9. The harnessing of modern technology and its use for education in developing countries were greatly favoured.

Overall, not surprisingly, there was a strong feeling that Dakar must represent a new beginning of a process which must not fail this time. For UNESCO, which has been entrusted with the overall responsibility of monitoring the Dakar follow-up, the key issue will be how to get things done at country level.

'Show and tell' session
where agencies present
their most recent
developments
commentary

A number of themes emerge from this traditional presentation of the issues uppermost in the minds of the representatives of donor agencies. It is clear that, in most cases, agencies continue to face the pressures of organizational change and the very hard work involved in coming to terms with either reductions in staff numbers, re-organization of entire departments, changes in political direction, and the requirements of rapidly changing priorities arising from the Dakar Forum, the ADEA meeting in Johannesburg of African education ministers and the adoption of sector-wide approaches (SWA) by a majority of donors for the delivery of education assistance.

A number of important themes appear in several reports, notably the two highlighted by the IWGE meeting itself: the major impact of HIV/AIDS, not only in Africa but elsewhere, especially South Asia and the former Soviet Union, and the question of quality. On the latter, there is a wide awareness of the need to keep quality firmly in perspective at a time when quantitative targets are once more on the agenda, and there are interesting reflections (to be considered later in this report) on how quality can be effected within a wider community context.

Two further major recurrent *motifs* are: *the education of women and girls*, and the continuing importance of *early childhood education*. This latter issue was especially stressed at the 1998 IWGE, and again there appears to be a widening awareness among educationists of the importance of a continuous process of education beginning in early childhood and moving, if possible seamlessly, into the later years. While the education of women and girls is not at this meeting analyzed in detail, it is nonetheless repeatedly mentioned as a key-issue. Underlying this and other themes is the issue of inclusiveness mentioned below by UNESCO in the context of helping marginalized groups, including those with special needs.

The other important theme, already discussed above in the summary of the key elements of the Dakar Forum, is the increasing need for a cross-sectoral or multidisciplinary approach to education. This is particularly highlighted in the FAO contribution below, where education is perceived not only as a key tool for agriculturalists themselves, but as something that increasingly needs to take cognizance of the needs of the rural community and of agriculture as an activity.

One further theme to emerge is the importance of knowledge-sharing, particularly given the electronic tools now available to virtually everyone in governments and agencies. This theme emerges from the World Bank, but also from other donors' statements about their policies and practices.

The sector-wide approach, which is the theme of a whole session of the programme, is being referred to by the different donors as a *fait accompli* which now simply needs refinement and effective application. It would appear that the concept that governments should drive the process of policy reform and implementation, with donors as supporters, is almost universally accepted.

World Bank

The summary of the Bank's new education sector strategy paper, as available on the Web, reveals the three levels of strategy: country, region and global. At country level there are 120 action plans which aim to operationalize the global priorities, while the six regional-sector strategies form the bridge between the global strategic considerations and the country-specific action plans. While there is significant overlap between the global priorities and those in the six regional strategies, there are clear differences between regions, in keeping with their different characters, needs and priorities.

Broad goals for the global strategy were outlined when the paper was released in 1999. The aim is to spend 50 per cent of education money on basic education, amounting to some $2-3 billion, with particular attention to the education of girls and the poorest sections of society. But there will also be some emphasis on technical/vocational education. In the post-Dakar period Bank staff are now working on a new strategy to support the President's commitment to an increase of resources for education.

New initiatives are being developed for Africa and South Asia with the aim of helping those countries that have the political will and ability to develop a credible plan. The other dimension is the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning, especially in early childhood development. HIV/AIDS education is likely to be extremely important over the next two years or more.

There is considerable interest in innovative delivery methods, including distance education and other technologies. The digital divide is increasingly seen as a threat to the future of education. Other key issues include reforms at post-basic level involving governance, decentralization, financing, and related issues. There is interest in the role of the private-sector initiative in education partnerships and there will be a renewed emphasis on poverty reduction.

Much of the Bank's work is being driven by the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative and the amounts of money are very large. In Mauritania, for instance, the amount of counterpart funding available exceeds the entire education budget, and the same is more or less true for Tanzania and Mozambique. One result will be that countries almost certainly will have difficulty in dealing with the problem of spending that magnitude of money. There is therefore an urgent need to rethink how the education sector will deal with HIPC situations. One answer will be to integrate education policies into poverty reduction strategy papers. In effect, debt relief actually puts great strain on staff and, for donors, the conditionalities are very limited.

It is interesting therefore to speculate on the future of education aid in the next decade: debt relief may crowd out conventional education assistance programmes and assistance itself will become much more like dialogue.

Another issue is how to accelerate progress towards EFA without deterioration in quality, as has been seen in Malawi, Mauritania and elsewhere. It is an issue on which education ministers are talking at the present time.

UNICEF

UNICEF currently has available three important documents: the edited advance copy of the report to the preparatory Committee for the *Special Session of the General Assembly in 2001 for follow-up to the World Summit for Children,* the *summaries of proceedings at the Preparatory Committee, June 2000* and one that can be downloaded from UNICEF's Website. The first of these deals with the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on Children scheduled for October 2001. The second refers to the World Summit for Children-plus-11, which reviews progress towards the original goals. The third is the outline of national reports from UNICEF's Website.

The Preparatory Committee has representation from many NGOs and other organizations. HIV/AIDS will be an important key issue. UNICEF's three key outcomes for children are being prepared for the work of the Special Session in 2001: a good start in life, in a nurturing, caring and safe environment; the opportunity to complete a good, quality education; the opportunity for adolescents to develop fully their individual capacities in safe and enabling environments. This implies a full 'life cycle' approach to exploring the needs of children from birth to 18 years of age. The new issues paper will now be discussed by organizations in an ongoing consultation process over the next few months. The Special Session at which it will be discussed will be a full-scale, formal United Nations meeting, which should take full account of the Dakar EFA Forum in terms of goals and strategies.

A major focus for UNICEF is the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative. A major component of this Initiative in 2001 will be to better engage bilaterals and NGOs in the initiative, especially at the country level. The focus of the initiative is on determining what keeps girls out of school, what is necessary to bridge the gender gap, and how the quality of education for girls can be improved through advocacy, social mobilization, improved management, and gender-sensitive systems and by using a wide range of interventions, including radio, food scholarships, community schools, national strategies on education in rural areas, nomad mobile schools programmes, and the use of older girl mentors. Other points of emphasis will lie in establishing the value added to societies derived from educating girls, including how to protect oneself from HIV/AIDS.

UNESCO

UNESCO's recent emphasis has been on continuing the restructuring process using participative processes so as to work increasingly with other organizations, especially UNICEF. Like other donors, it is glad to be able to merge its funds with those of others and not identify its projects as specifically originating from UNESCO. Current work includes the monitoring of basic education post-Jomtien and Dakar through the development of indicators. This process ties up with the general aim of trying to produce much more reliable education statistics.

Among specific programmes, UNESCO is currently preparing a broad programme on HIV/AIDS, and in its work on handicapped children and those with special needs it sees opportunities for removing some of the barriers to learning faced by that particular population.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics

The UNESCO Executive Board has agreed to move the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) to Montreal, where it will be able to operate in a university environment, where advantages will include involving Ph.D. students in ongoing work. Education forms only part of the overall output, which also includes communications, science and technology, and culture. The Institute carried out the EFA statistical assessment for the Dakar Forum where there was surprisingly little discussion of statistics, especially as there had been some dissent at the mid-term point of the EFA process. It is not difficult to believe that some EFA data are incorrect, and their accuracy has been discussed with a number of countries.

The UIS is looking for partners, especially where equity in education is a concern. Its next activities will consist of running workshops across the globe and talking to statisticians in line ministries, especially MOEs. As is well known, statistical data are usually not well connected to policy-making, and UIS is exploring what the barriers are to the collection and proper deployment of data; there will then be a careful assessment of training needs.

UIS would now like broad ranging discussions with donors on the issue of quality assurance in data collection. Would it be possible, for example, to set up a quality protocol? Capacity-building activity will need to focus on regular data collection, but with a concentration on more extensive collection in countries deemed to be in crisis. Dissemination of statistical data will no longer focus on the Yearbook, which has always consumed huge resources and is out of date from the day it is published Instead, concentration will be on a dynamic Website, with related CD-ROMs available for distribution.

Food and Agriculture Organization

The FAO has identified three major educational issues, of which the first is the question of the disparities of access as between rural and urban children. This is a key topic on which there is currently little or no information, and FAO wants the issue put on to EFA agendas for further data collection and research. The difficulties which rural children may have in accessing education cannot be addressed until facts are established, and this is urgent.

The second issue surrounds quality in relation to the urban bias of curriculum and textbooks. Because of the well-recognized urban bias of curriculum development and related materials, many of the topics presented to rural children are irrelevant to their experience of everyday life. There is a need for a shift in focus towards rural development during the preparation of materials and curricula.

The third main issue is an internal one for the FAO. It needs to develop an in-house professional capacity in order to deal with educational issues as they relate to the FAO's mainstream work, and to enhance relevant partnerships.

Future support to Member States will begin to concentrate on how education relates to nutrition, food security and agricultural production. There will be a strong emphasis on identifying activities that will expand the access of rural populations to educational facilities. This will include the improvement of transport for children living more than three miles from school, of canteens to encourage wider access, and of school calendars to take account of the agricultural cycle. Relevant lifelong education for men and women will be developed to supplement the school experience.

At tertiary level, universities will be encouraged to focus on their potential role as service providers to farmers, while at government level, Member States will be encouraged to develop policies on rural training and education, with enhanced dialogue between agriculture and education departments aimed at increasing the awareness of staff of the need for collaboration between sectors.

FAO does not seek any form of 'ownership' of education, but it is conscious that much of the work in agricultural development must have educational content and methodologies, while education departments need to take account of the specific needs of rural populations. One of the great successes of Cuban education has been that it addresses rural needs.

All this serves to heighten awareness of the difficulties that are faced in trying to establish what support is given to education, since it makes the point that the labelling of activities as 'education' is bound to be imprecise.

World Health Organization

Education is recognized by WHO as an important tool for improving the quality of health-care services, and medical faculties are increasingly accepting that the educational process is an important element in the training of staff, as serious attempts are made to improve practice in medical faculties.

There are, in fact, 1,643 medical faculties worldwide but there is no worldwide accreditation scheme that can be applied to them. There is considerable interest in developing such a scheme, but some resistance to the idea. Many institutions of very doubtful quality are in the process of evolving at a time when there is a growing recognition that medical faculties should have a social responsibility. No one has yet developed an appropriate measure of social accountability that can be applied to a medical faculty, but governments are increasingly interested in doing so in order to assure themselves of value for money.

Another central interest is the question of what universities can provide for the underprivileged, and a project is being developed in that sphere. At the same time questions are being asked about how far can the academic world help to transform health-care systems across the world, reducing fragmentation as they do so. Of particular concern is the high degree of fragmentation between medicine and public health and between general practitioners and health workers. Can the academic institutions rise to the challenge of bringing all this together?

European Union

Important changes have been taking place in development policy with particular reference to education aid, and staff may be forgiven for feeling that they are involved in a lifelong period of turbulence. Major changes have already taken place, and the resulting documents define new political and strategic guidelines.

One of the developments is a new partnership agreement between the European Union and the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries which should be signed soon, with all but Fiji. In the pipeline is also a communication from the Commission on its development policies, including new global guidelines; this should soon become a resolution and a legal instrument for the Council of Ministers. In addition, a draft communication is being prepared on the management of external subsidies and aid, while a further one is on programming methodologies deriving from the new partnership agreements with ACP countries.

At the present time a fresh organizational chart is being discussed which would lead to the creation of a new unit dealing with human development, of which education could possibly remain as the marker term for this new unit.

The EU expects to commit 13 billion euros to education in the next five years, using more integrated and targeted development programmes focused on priority areas. These will include poverty, closely tied in with support to the social sectors of education and health, with clear performance indicators to identify results. The Commission is rapidly developing a method of disbursements that will be directly linked to the identified results.

SWA is strongly supported as an approach, so that in all projects integrated programmes should be moving towards a SWA model. One high priority lies in ensuring the enhanced participation of civil society in aid discussions and the allocation of funds.

Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)

The major meeting arranged by ADEA in Johannesburg in 1999 was important as a means of enabling African ministers and other important policy-makers to explore the current state of thinking. The approach was to ask what currently appears to work and then develop an inventory of viable policy options that would be seen as lying close to the situation in the field. In many respects this could be conceived of as a modern version of the renaissance idea of developing policy and knowledge with close links to empirical experience.

Twenty-five countries participated in the conference, and one result was to open up the exercise to other countries not directly participating by making the proceedings widely known, and to extend discussion to the major and difficult issue of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. ADEA has sent out a letter to governments inviting description and discussion of promising approaches, and the response rate has been much more encouraging than it was two years ago. So far there have been sixteen respondents with five proposals for co-ordination. The sharing of information about what countries are doing to address HIV/AIDS issues is highly desirable.

One important new activity involves the development of the competences of communication officers in ministries and specialist journalists so that they are able to get over education messages to the public much more clearly. Experience shows that the press frequently complain that staff in ministries of education do not understand the constraints under which they operate, and the purpose of the project is to enable a far better channel of communication between ministries and journalists, with a view to improving the public's understanding of what is taking place in education. The Carnegie Foundation and EU have joined ADEA in this project. ADEA's policy paper can be seen on its Website, and it now has a total of 900 projects on its database.

Sida (Sweden)

A Parliamentary Committee is currently reviewing the coherence of various policies, while poverty alleviation continues to be strongly highlighted, along with human rights and the development of democratic institutions. The review process may take a year more; there are hopes for an increase in Swedish development contributions, partly because of the welcome expansion of the Swedish economy, and partly because there is some public sense (among, for example, senior church people) that Sweden might be losing its cutting edge at the forefront of development policy and practice.

Official Swedish figures for assistance to education do not include expenditure on support and research in the higher-education area. Funds for this sub-sector are now almost as high as for basic education. Meanwhile, Sida has adopted a policy of sector programme support with a genuine emphasis on seeking partnerships. This will include a strong policy of co-ordination with other donors and the removal of 'Swedish flags' from projects.

The move towards a greater emphasis on sector support is not easy to communicate, and requires big changes in modalities and attitudes. Essentially it is a process approach, with all the imprecision implicit in that. To some extent it will require a sacrifice of identity as dialogues develop with partners, and the careful harmonization of procedures emerges.

Sida has produced a position paper on the status of teachers and their working conditions. A new policy paper is being prepared, covering the whole education sector to replace the existing paper on basic education. This will cover sector support as well as human rights, women's education, and environmental issues.

NORAD (Norway)

Within NORAD considerable restructuring is taking place at the present time. Norway has developed a new strategy paper covering the years 2000-2005. Overall, longer-term programmes will be developed, and more co-ordination with other donors will be sought for work at country level, as well as with ministries of education.

With enhanced focus on social development policies, an aim will be to raise education to 15 per cent of the programme. In addition, there will be greater importance given to peace and human rights issues. A paper on how greater support can be given to disabled adults and children in the development process will appear shortly from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Corruption will also be targeted.

DANIDA (Denmark)

For DANIDA, interest is in developing a new strategy: 'Partnership 2000' which involves examining new ways of collaborating with governments. A very high priority is being given to children and youth within the wider context of human development. There is a feeling at DANIDA that while children and youth are self-evidently the resource of the future, they are actually being marginalized and not fully brought into the development process.

Moreover, a large proportion of children and youth is experiencing polarization and marginalization, which are socially destructive and hold many problems for the future. In terms of the delivery of Danish aid, about half of it goes to what DANIDA calls 'active multilateralism', where the emphasis is on conscious partnership with multilateral donors. Inclusion/exclusion will be a key area for future collaboration with UNESCO.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Finland)

A recent management group of the Danish International Development Authority chaired by the Minister concluded that Finland wants to make a positive approach to sector programmes, as long as "special emphasis (is) put on analyzing the adequacy and accountability of financial management systems when deciding on pooling of funds and budget support". Finland is currently participating in such programmes in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Zambia, Tanzania and Nepal. New Finnish education programmes include South Africa, Nicaragua, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.

Finland recently held a training programme organized by the Overseas Development Institute for its staff and consultants, providing a useful start for newcomers. Recent materials include a book on *How sectoral programmes work*, plus a book on Ethiopia co-financed by DFID and others.

JICA (Japan)

JICA has made recent changes in education support, including expanded assistance in capacity building, school management and administration, and education for women and girls. Among new initiatives are school-mapping programmes in Malawi and Tanzania, in co-operation with other agencies such as UNICEF, using IIEP technology. As a still relatively new institution, JICA is looking for opportunities to co-operate with others in order to gain from their experience.

The agency is currently undergoing a reorganizational phase with the introduction of a regional structure concentrating on an Africa, an Asia and a combined Middle East/Latin America department. A global division is responsible for education, which does not yet have its own departmental representation. The main problem, however, is with establishing an adequate supply of senior-level professionals to handle educational programmes, and there is a real need for the training of departmental staff.

CIDA (Canada)

CIDA continues to operate in its earlier key areas which include basic human needs, democracy and good governance, and the environment. Despite budget cuts over past years, there is optimism about the future, given current new leadership. Canada is taking basic education seriously, along with an emphasis on debt relief and the fight against corruption. On the former in particular, Canada takes its leadership role seriously.

Under new ministerial direction there has been considerable restructuring and since 1998 a more thorough review of educational expenditures, which increased 4 per cent from 1997 to 1998. During this period CIDA invested 50 per cent of its total education budget on basic education. Other key areas have included health (HIV/AIDS), child protection, and the important area of peace and security. CIDA is now producing education action plans for quick mobilization of its resources; one such plan already exists on HIV/AIDS. The agency has 3 education specialists out of the original 14, but includes a distance-education specialist in its team.

In terms of SWA, the first such approach has been operating in Uganda over the past year with Mali, Burkina Faso and Senegal as potential candidates. CIDA wants to emphasize girls' education, and to ensure the development of civil society with a particular thrust towards partnership with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Centre of Human Capacity Development has now established three teams dealing with training (in-country and USA-based), technology and distance learning. The new basic education policy has been prepared and finalized, and although it emphasizes the primary level, it also covers non-formal education, secondary education, early childhood development and teacher training.

USAID (United States)

The USA Government's current emphases are on basic education, particularly that of girls, health education and information technology. There are currently attempts to move towards a 50 per cent increase in funding for basic education, moving from some $100 million to well over $155 million; all this is in addition to any work in progress on debt relief, where funds should also become available for support to basic education as the USA Government tries to work with the World Bank to favour health and basic education in the use of the money freed by debt-relief initiatives. In working on G7 preparation USAID wants to try to mobilize general feelings of philanthropy worldwide towards basic education.

Other initiatives currently in hand are studies on developing participatory policy planning, educational quality, child labour, information technology, environmental education, and HIV/AIDS. Important opportunities arise from building on the valuable work undertaken by ADEA. More details are available on the USAID Website.

On sector-wide approaches, quite a lot of work needs to be done and experience gained. It could be argued that an earlier version of SWA was 'non-projectized' assistance, which gradually over time became 'projectized' in order to restore some sense of clarity and focus to it. The move to SWA in a sense moves back towards that earlier version of assistance which preceded concept of the project and care may need to be taken to ensure that history does not repeat itself.

DSE (Germany)

Much has changed with the new German Government, including the arrival of a special statement on development co-operation by the new lady minister. Substantial work has been undertaken on debt relief and more consideration has been given to cross-cutting issues, poverty reduction, human rights, and governance. The ensuing cross-sectoral approach has inevitably led to challenges for sectoral staff because of the conceptual leap to these wider issues and the difficulty of relating new goals to ongoing work.

There have been cuts in the development aid budget and some organizational restructuring to create new synergies. DSE is in the process of reducing the number of co-operating countries from over 100 to under 30. The possibility of fusing DSE and a number of sister organizations into one bigger organization is currently under scrutiny.

GTZ (Germany)

GTZ has the unusual and welcome experience of a new minister who is a teacher by profession! As with other agencies, girls' education is a priority. Currently the agency is involved in three new initiatives: complete revision and re-issue of the 1992 sector policy paper; overhaul of the 1993 guidelines for implementing approaches in basic education with a more comprehensive approach to such issues as teacher education; and a new cross-sectoral approach to basic education.

Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Education and Developing Countries Division

Working within a reduced number of countries, the Ministry is passing through a period where no reorganizations are envisaged; it maintains a small unit for basic education with three staff members plus five sector specialists within embassies, including South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Burkina Faso and Mali. A total of 12 partner countries have selected education as a priority for Dutch bilateral aid, including Bolivia (the only country in Latin America), South Africa, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Mali, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Mozambique, India, Bangladesh and Macedonia. In countries that are not listed (such as Nepal), the Minister is interested in using co-operation with other donor countries to enable Dutch funds to go through a third country.

Department of Foreign Affairs, Development Co-operation Division (Ireland)

The Irish aid budget is due to increase over the next few years with Ireland's percentage increase in GDP, leading to a welcome increase in the numbers of staff in the agency. Work is proceeding on improving systems, including DAC statistical data. The increases have led to more coherence across the division in terms of support for education, along with NGOs and emergencies. The adoption of the SWA approach involves more work on concepts of partnership and ownership. Palestine and South Africa are newcomers in education programmes.

DFID (UK)

The Department is seeing a significant upsizing in professional staff numbers, and with a Secretary of State who is very active and has strong links to the Treasury, there are fast changes in policy. There is much public and political interest in educational development, characterized by strong pressure groups. Staff are again in the middle of writing another White Paper only two years after the last report on poverty elimination. The intention this time is to re-contextualize support to poverty within the globalization process. Consequently there is an exciting challenge in thinking through the place of education in relation to human rights and other modalities.

Last year's published education paper provided a framework for support across the sector, but staff are now working on a document focusing on universal primary education, with the EFA development targets very much in mind. One important issue being addressed is how to underpin policies and actions by knowledge and an adequate research base.

DFID is expanding country programmes in both sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. It is estimated that there has been expenditure of £300 million on basic education over the past three years, with an overall education portfolio of about £800 million. Coming years will see increased potential for moving money into the sector.

The Department is currently moving away from its past tight theology about SWA and this is leading it to look at its working methods. One realization is that you cannot operate internationally unless you have sufficient staff, and this has led to the creation of a core team in London focusing on broad issues such as access and inclusion, quality and economics with an increased number of in-country field advisers.

This raises one of the issues being tackled by the IWGE: how to identify and nurture new staff. People with both an international perspective and the ability and experience to operate effectively at country level are needed. The main difficulty lies in finding people who can think strategically at the country level. An Associate Professional Officer scheme has been introduced in order to bring on younger staff; some of this group are now beginning to work at country level. Overall, DFID is able to paint a buoyant picture but one in which staff are challenged in terms of thinking through new strategies.

Ministère des Affaires étrangères (France)

Since the last meeting of the IWGE considerable reform of governmental structures has taken place within the French administration, with changes both to the sub-sectors and the areas of co-operation: French policy has always aimed at education for all with the emphasis on basic access, fairness and relevance, to which should be added gender issues.

French co-operation is now tackling its global and systemic structures, and since 1998 has been aiming to reduce the number of structures and programmes that have emerged over the years to produce a much more consistent and transparent organization. The old Ministry of Co-operation (dealing with francophone sub-Saharan Africa) has completely disappeared and is now part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, producing a whole global coverage, especially for education.

The new approach sees the French Development Agency intervening in education with responsibility for investment actions in the social and education sectors. In order to achieve better co-ordination, an inter-ministerial committee has been created. One important objective is to involve French civil society in development co-operation as far as possible.

The brochure that was produced for the Dakar Forum usefully recapitulates the strong points of educational activity over the past 10 years, which have seen a very high level of co-operation in education so far. At the present time it is very difficult to conceive of any further increase in this sector.

Instead, the aim is to stabilize activities at the present level, but to change the means of delivery. France's past strength has been very much in technical assistance, which is now operating at a much lower level, around 20 per cent of the total budget. There is also a change of quality as projects have departed from an emphasis on the narrower focus of curriculum and moved to the strengthening of institutional capacity.

It would be true to say that French aid has moved in cycles: after the 1960s there was a move away from basic education in favour of secondary and higher education. But the crisis in basic education led to reinvestment during the 1990s while maintaining a concern for other levels of education.

Traditionally sub-Saharan Africa has been the prevailing area of interest for France; but the focus has now shifted, with an increase in the number of supported countries from 30 to 60. A key issue is partnership leading to a better understanding by everyone of the importance of civil society. There is a strong desire to strengthen collaboration with other bilateral agencies and the multilaterals.

Agence française de développement (France)

The Agency has received funding for 50 years, and education and health have been key areas of focus. With the restructuring process, the Agency is now attempting to define a new policy with sectoral and country priorities.

There is a significant growth in funding for education, which means that the Agency is in the process of upsizing its programmes. The challenge lies in making greater investments in the social sector work effectively as more funds flow from other sub-sectors.

Basic education has been set aside by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a priority, together with technical training for the high-school sector. In terms of country priorities, the aim is to deal with the poorest countries, which are, of course, the most difficult to target.

Interesting new lessons are being learned in the process of changing approaches and priorities. In concentrating on building schools, the Agency is facing interesting new issues revolving round such things as the ongoing functioning of systems. One basic fact that has to be faced is the issue of frequent maintenance and repair: for example, water systems in villages need maintaining again 10-15 years after they have been built. Similarly, arrangements have to be made for the population of a village to take responsibility for the ongoing state of a school once it has been built so that outside agencies do not have to return to repair or rebuild it.

The Agency is also looking at the issue of administrative decentralization, with particular reference to sub-Saharan Africa. On debt relief France accepts a special responsibility for it, and the government wants to maintain control over the flows that lead to annulment; hence, French money will be advanced in the form of loans against which recipients will have to make allocations to health, education and other social sectors before they can draw down further funds. One-third of counterpart funding will go to education. This prospective increase in funding for education may well lead to problems of managing the funds and applying them effectively.

Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Austria)

Aid is still located within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where there is competition between the needs of Eastern Europe and those of developing countries. This is an important issue, given the physical proximity of Austria to Eastern Europe. Poverty reduction remains a principal aim, but combined with peace-building and conflict prevention. In East Africa Austria is close to the World Bank. This includes a district-level development in Uganda and HIPC initiatives.

A new education-sector policy is being developed with more priority given to basic education. Some of the main issues will include vocational training, access as well as quality, together with institutional and capacity building. The department is keen to create a reliable database or access to those of others. On the sector-wide approach (SWA), the aim is to develop local consultants and enhance the capacity of local training institutions with a view to replacing expatriates with local experts.

Theme 2
Improving the quality of learning

What makes quality of learning?

Elaine Furniss (UNICEF)

What does *quality* mean in the context of education?[2] In attempting to define what we mean by *quality* we need to remember that education is a complex system embedded in a political, cultural and economic context. The focus has to be on learning which strengthens the capacities of children to act on their own behalf through the acquisition of relevant knowledge, useful skills and appropriate attitudes. It must also create places of safety, security and healthy interaction.

Quality, by general consensus, would include characteristics such as:

- learners who are healthy, well-nourished, ready to participate and learn while being supported in this by their families and communities;
- healthy, safe and gender-sensitive environments with adequate resources and facilities;
- relevant curricula and materials for basic skills in literacy, numeracy, life skills, and relevant knowledge in such matters as HIV/AIDS prevention, gender equity, peace and nutrition;
- processes through which trained teachers use child-centred approaches in well-managed classrooms and skilful assessments to facilitate learning and reduce disparities;

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[2] UNICEF (2000). "Defining quality" paper presented by UNICEF at the (IWGE) meeting, Florence, Italy.

- outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, positive participation in society and are linked to national goals for education.

School systems work with the children who come into them, and many elements go into the making of a **quality learner**, including good health and nutrition for normal brain development in the early years, early detection and intervention for disabilities, prevention of infection and disease, family support for the learning process, and positive early childhood experiences.

In terms of the **learning environment**, the key factors are physical elements such as access to quality school facilities, including water and sanitation and class size; psychosocial elements such as peaceful, safe environments, especially for girls, and effective school discipline, health and nutrition policies and inclusive environments, eliminating forms of discrimination; and service delivery, as in the case of the adequate provision of health services.

A further element is **quality content**, with student-centred and non-discriminatory curricula that have unique local and national content, covering such pivotal areas as literacy, numeracy, life skills and peace education.

Quality processes include the development of the teaching profession such that teachers undergo educational preparation and ongoing development, are committed to the professional process (rather than, for example, having second jobs), and experience effective school programmes that are organized according to children's work and family obligations. In addition, teachers must have positive attitudes (such as the belief that *all* children can learn) and sensitivity to gender issues, both in learning and in relationships with pupils. Their working conditions must be such that they feel valued, adequately remunerated and suitably equipped with teaching aids.

Such processes also involve administrative support and leadership within the school, including professional and supportive evaluation. Other processes include the ability of students to understand the language medium used in school and access to technologies that, if denied, will otherwise increase the disparities between children in different parts of the globe.

Quality outcomes include:

- achievement in literacy and numeracy;
- using formative rather than simply summative assessment;
- social promotion and employment, so long as these do not lead to lack of respect for parents, the assumption of attitudes of superiority, and the failure of girls to accept traditional rules or duties;
- community-related outcomes, including knowledge of human rights and the ability to analyze social situations, demonstrate autonomy in learning and exercise responsibility towards other pupils;
- health, including the ability to provide care for illness and infection and knowledge leading to more effective health and hygiene behaviours — all combined with improvement of nutrition and health arising from better feeding programmes;
- life skills, both psychosocial and interpersonal, providing better knowledge of such matters as HIV/AIDS prevention and avoidance of the use of drugs.

There are many examples of programmes with these elements within them, including Chile's programme for quality improvement in primary schools in disadvantaged areas and Guatemala's Nueva Escuela Unitaria programme to create positive participatory environments.

Research has begun to give us the 'what?' of quality, but the question now is the 'how?'. UNICEF is keenly interested in knowing what gaps still exist in the panorama covered by research, and what other agencies can add to the already established findings.

Emily Vargas-Baron

The main challenges faced by the six goals set at the Dakar Forum lie in the imperfect nature of the world in which we live.[3] A significant number of countries face crises of various kinds, some highly dramatic, others silent yet no less serious. About one-third of countries suffer some form of crisis, whether in the form of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, a huge influx of refugees, conflict, famine, or natural catastrophe. These and other influences create the conditions for cultural disintegration and the widespread loss of cultural identity, leading in turn to behavioural problems. It is noticeable that 50 per cent of the world's nations together contain most of the children who are not in school. Usually it is predominantly rural people who suffer most from these problems and influences. Unless we can find ways of helping with the shoring up of traditional societies, we shall have increasing amounts of ethnic conflict of the kind we have already seen in many places.

The specific challenges faced by societies include cultural disintegration, the problems arising from globalism and competitiveness, the digital divide (which separates the "haves from the have-nots"), the old traditional central planning model that excludes communities from school governance, the emphasis on inputs rather than outcomes in achieving educational quality, the lack of accountability in education systems (in the sense that learning assessments are not related directly to curricular objectives), or the neglect of subordinate cultural groups who lack education facilities that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

The questions that arise in asking what can be done about these major problems include:

- since we know that unskilled, unemployed youth frequently are progenitors of violence, how can we achieve improved basic education where it is lacking?

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[3] Vargas-Baron, E. (2000). "Strategies for improving learning in an imperfect world", paper presented to the (IWGE), Florence, Italy.

- as cultures lose their economic base and core values, how do we help the affected peoples and their cultures to save themselves?
- how can poor, often landlocked nations and subordinate ethnic groups be helped to compete successfully in the modern world?
- how can poor nations catch up with those who already have information technologies?
- how can nations be assisted in building participatory planning systems?
- how do we change the perceptions of educational planners who still believe that inputs are the key to educational quality, rather than whether or not the children are actually learning?
- what low-cost methods can be found to ensure learning assessments are related more directly to curricular objectives so that systems are fully accountable and take account of all children's abilities, including those of children with disabilities?

The concept of the sovereign state is an important issue, since in many cases it cuts out beneficial external influence. The Kurds are restricted from asserting their identify by their lack of a national state, while Bosnia displays disturbing patterns of violence among communities with different cultural identities. A pre-emptive approach to potential violence has to be developed: more tools are needed to create peace zones through the preparation of peace-friendly curricula that will ensure that children do not continue the patterns of violence created and perpetuated by their forebears. Certain countries are notable for their failure to create a peace curriculum even when all the conditions for inter-communal struggle are apparent.

Cultural assumptions often lie at the centre of the issue. Of the questions above, the underlying one is how communities can be helped to compete globally without losing their essentially local culture. At the same time, equality of provision and opportunity as between rural and urban are an essential goal since children in rural areas need the same opportunities as those in urban: if computers provide logical approaches to knowledge and its organization, these tools are as indispensable to the rural child as her/his urban counterpart.

Defining quality through the measure of outputs rather than inputs is a major internal revolution that education systems have yet to confront. Experience shows that even illiterate parents can become adept at assessing their children's learning outcomes, and assisting them to be involved in the process is a powerful tool for achieving accountability through community involvement in what is happening in the classroom.

The problem for many rural groups is that they do not themselves perceive the huge disparity between the provision available for themselves and for those who live in urban areas. At the heart of the problem is the difficulty of (a) providing a relevant form of education for ethnic minority groups that will use their cultural medium and (b) of increasing the perception among others, whether donors or even governments themselves, of the need for this.

General discussion

Experience at the Dakar EFA Forum indicated a broad consensus that there is an urgent need to provide quality education to excluded groups, including rural communities. The Escuela Nueva and the educational work of BRAC are well recognized, but it is not so easy to discover the new generation of successful experiments.

But there is a strong tendency to look at quality improvement from a systems angle, focusing on teachers' salaries, their conditions of service and other individual mechanical aspects of the process, when really what is needed is to start on the problem from the bottom upwards. We need to ask how schools are actually operating within their wider social context. Unless commitment is built up at the school and community level, it cannot grow, because it does not work if it is imposed from above. The actors themselves have to recognize the essential elements of quality and understand how to work towards achieving it.

Relations within the school and the interaction between teachers, head, parents and children, lie at the heart of community involvement, especially as the role of head is an essential element that is still not often seriously recognized as important to the achievement of quality. While teacher and student absenteeism are seen as serious problems, changes in school/community relations are essential if absenteeism is to be dealt with adequately.

It follows therefore that the problem is not so much in finding new ideas, but in finding ways of encouraging changes of perception and thinking. This, however, involves having enough people and time to do this. There is now a wide collective knowledge of what will work in the generic sense, but we do not have the resources and capacity to deliver at the macro level, because the problem is not one of thinking through new strategies, but of finding ways of making them work in specific situations community by community.

This is one of the approaches adopted by the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) as it focuses on small-scale projects at a local level. Inevitably, there then follows a tension between the successful small group approach and the next step which logically consists of going to scale. Few recognize what is involved in going to scale or how it can be done flexibly. The ability of whole education systems to absorb lessons that are applicable locally is a major issue.

A good example lies in a school the AKF has supported in Tusla (Bosnia). Ninety per cent of the parents are unemployed and a large number of the children are from single-parent households and not living in their own homes. Yet the school is a highly vibrant one, with a management team consisting of teachers, parents and students. Of these the students play an active role in decisions relating to the running of the school. The management process is characterized by wide discussion involving linkages between different parts of the community. But the significant point is that going to scale on this important experiment is not about replicating the actions of this particular programme which might not work in the same way elsewhere, but of trying to replicate the attitudes that underlie it. There simply is no 'magic bullet' approach which will work everywhere.

The Government of India appears to take a different approach: it has made clear that it is not interested in pilot projects, preferring to go to scale at once. Its approach is to put in place a process of very small improvements but implemented on a large scale. This model has significant implications.

The issue of cultural appropriateness is important for governments, particularly those that are responsible for remote peoples. In order to provide education and motivation for such communities it is essential to stress the things that bind them together rather than those that divide them. But this can only be done where community needs are genuinely understood and empathized with. In Ghana, for example, the government has encouraged the introduction of school performance committees drawn from the community at large. The disaster in Sierra Leone is caused by the neglect of 'up-country' boys who were dissatisfied with their education before joining the rebels and turning to violence.

The Escuela Nueva, which was founded essentially for rural people, has been steadily building into its curriculum a component of peace education. It is worthy of note that even in such a violent society as Colombia's it is rural children who are most interested in peace education. The Ministry of Education has taken the unusual step of asking for a loan for rural education, in recognition of the importance of ensuring that rural children are adequately provided for. This is unusual in the sense that, by not discriminating, most governments simply automatically favour the urban population as a default position.

Like others, the World Bank recognizes that the real challenge lies in going to scale, but it knows that it is a long way from having the skills and attitudes to be able to do this. It does not, for example, have the skills or knowledge to be able to handle peace education at the present time. Many staff have yet to take the step of listening in the right kind of way to the right kind of signals, and it is recognized by many that training should for the time being focus on cultural change. All organizations need to remind themselves that what is being discussed and defined will require significant cultural change among staff.

This raises the question, how far do governments share the same sets of assumptions? Donors work with governments on a daily basis, and they commonly use the term 'we'. The dynamic of involvement between donor and government is a real and underrated issue, particularly in the context of sector-wide programmes. The replication of innovation is an issue among donors, but is the understanding of what it implies shared by those who work in ministries? In one country in Southern Africa recently, a senior official in a ministry of education encouraged colleagues to travel round rural schools in order to see what was actually happening on the ground. One official involved admitted he had not been in a school for 10 years, and that he was totally devastated by what he was now seeing in terms of quality. Dialogue with governments needs to be unpinned by direct and recent experience on both sides.

At the pupil level there are important lessons to be learned. One Kenyan high-school student described vividly how she walked to school every day full of apprehension of the bullying and harassment that she would face when she got there. There is an overriding need to look at the healthiness and protectiveness of the school environment and to bring to the table other organizations who are concerned with the school's broader environment and how this affects its quality. Quality is not just about the cognitive psycho-social environment, but about matters of health, security and other basics.

Security is a matter with which refugee education is closely associated. UNHCR has been looking at the whole area of provision and is struck by the extent to which there is still a reluctance to see communities within an overall context. There is still a tendency to share out different segments of responsibility between different agencies without seeing the problem as a whole. Fragmentation raises whole issues of who are we working with and how a government learns to understand the underlying importance of security.

Ultimately, the problem comes back to more teachers. Teachers should be linked closely with learners. They have usually gone through a poor-quality education themselves, in highly conservative educational institutions, and so there is a major challenge in seeking to change the strong replicated system which shapes their behaviour and attitudes. If teachers are not nourished and do not have self-esteem, they will be unable to change anything at all. There is an overwhelming need to focus on teachers as subjects, rather than as just agents in the replicated processes. We need to remember that teachers are poorly educated and are poor themselves. Recurrent budgets are often too small and it is important to continue to provide money for blackboards, chalk, books and other simple basics.

Linked to the quality of teachers is the issue of making an effective use of existing resources for education and especially combining old technologies (such as books) and new ones. This in turn raises the question of the involvement of the private sector in education, which will become increasingly important.

Summing-up

There is an urgent need to work on what used to be called replication and is now described as going to scale. Quality is about design and evaluation with key intervention points that can influence a whole system. Leadership as referred to above is an important issue. Private and public partnerships are important components, and top-down support for bottom-up development is essential.

In crisis countries more conceptual development is needed, especially in the realm of peace education. 'Peace laboratories' are needed for negotiation and for bringing together dissident groups. There needs to be liaison with the police and military to secure zones for community security. There is still a lot to learn.

The central point is that parents must be able better to assess learning outcomes. In the past there has been too much focus on targets, on making organograms with all the paraphernalia of lists, boxes, arrows and ovals. New conceptual models need to be devised to perceive how things should be.

Quality and early childhood development

Soo-Hyang Choi

There is no agreed definition for early childhood care and education (ECCE), and different terms are used to describe the same process.[4] Nevertheless, there is a general understanding of what is meant by ECCE to the extent that the wide range of interested organizations seem content not to try to define it too closely. However defined, it has been closely linked to the quality of subsequent learning and is viewed as a key foundation for the lifelong learning process, prevention of infection and disease, family support for the learning process, and positive links with primary education (partly because most research data so far generated illustrate ECCE's impact only on the primary cycle).

ECCE is distinguishable through six key conceptual categories:

- *Forms of provision:* provided formally, non-formally and informally involving not only pre-school education, but also non-formal home- or community-based programmes. Informal learning taking place at home and parent education are integral.
- *Providers:* public and private agents (NGOs, parents, communities).
- *Target group:* children aged between 0 and 8.
- *Educators*: family members, outside-home carers, pre-school teachers.
- *Beneficiaries:* children and their parents.

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4. Soo-Hyang Choi (2000). "Early childhood care and education: the foundation for quality learning" Paper produced for the IWGE, Florence, Italy.

- *Effects*: educational (to increase the internal efficiency of primary education and lay the foundation for lifelong learning), social (to promote social cohesion by removing the roots of social discrimination), economic (to encourage female labour force and increase economic productivity, and rights-based (to uphold the Convention on the Rights of the Child).

There is now evidence available to indicate the benefits and effects of ECCE on the quality of subsequent learning. The public cost of school repetition in 1995 in all regions totalled $6 billion and total wastage before Grade 5 in the less developed regions absorbed 15.8 per cent of public expenditures on education. Obviously a wide range of factors are involved in repetition, but family background and ECCE exercise the second strongest influence (after school resources) in reducing childhood vulnerability, with the greatest gains for rural children.

The reasons for this are that ECCE facilitates the acquisition of cognitive, linguistic skills and lays down the overall developmental base including social and emotional competence for later learning. There are also benefits deriving from proper nutrition, the foremost of which is good health.

This linkage has important political implications, since it obviously increases the strength of advocacy for investment in this level of provision. In this context ECCE should be viewed as a domain of production rather than consumption; because its beneficial linkages with primary education are fairly easy to establish, it is seen as facilitating the child's subsequent performance at primary level, and is able to attract funding as a spin-off from the current enthusiasm for primary education.

There are, however, also dangers in this linkage, since popularly it is easy for ECCE to be viewed as a downward extension of primary, with too much emphasis on achievement rather than development. This tendency to equate it with pre-primary education, rather than with the much broader advantages of general early development, can easily overlook some of the important effects on the family as a whole.

Where political commitment already exists, as in Sweden, there is no pressure to prove ECCE's immediate utility and hence pedagogy is able to focus on child development rather than on producing short-term results. But advocacy for new political commitment needs to make clear the distinction between a narrowly focused pedagogical approach and a wider and more desirable emphasis on broad development.

In terms of developing countries, an understanding of the distinction between political commitment and political viability is important. Resources are scarce, and traditionally education is perceived in terms of learning rather than development. It is also important not to confuse pedagogical issues with those of institutional efficiency. Broadly, it is important that ECCE should be seen as having a wide, developmental impact on the child and its subsequent learning, rather than that it should be perceived in purely pedagogical terms.

General discussion

There have been many examples in Latin America and Asia where ECCE programmes have improved children's opportunities during the primary cycle and later, especially with the involvement of community organizations and NGOs. It is very clear that ECCE has a substantial bearing on quality. One key point that has to be borne in mind is that ECCE is not simply the responsibility of ministries of education, but of other relevant government departments, making a cross-sectoral approach essential. Defining ECCE raises the issue how an education system can best make itself ready for children, rather than *vice versa*.

The consultative group on ECCE has, among other things, issued a co-ordinator's notebook which provides guidance on how the activity fits into a broader context and how co-ordinators can most effectively obtain parents' commitment. The involvement of parents and of community must form the basis for successful programmes.

There is at last a broad realization that basic education simply does not start in Grade 1 of primary school. The benefits to health and nutrition cannot be too obvious and increasingly ECCE programmes look at the benefits of immunization and nutrition. More importantly, there are additional opportunities to initiate programmes relating to equality and attitudes to violence, even at this stage.

Research on brain-stem development in the USA has produced wholehearted state support for ECCE, with a widespread recognition that it produces lower healthcare and social services costs. As long ago as 1972 the Ford Foundation started the children survival and fair start programmes. It is now estimated that nine months' investment produces a positive return. But to be effective, ECCE requires intensive and integrated services, and it has to be both culturally derived and appropriate.

Nor should the importance of parental development as an integral part of ECCE be under-emphasized. In an effective programme parents begin to provide services to other parents with a consequent improvement in parenting skills. This particular element should ideally go up to the school entry point and beyond.

However, problems are beginning to arise as expectations are raised, particularly when they are raised on such a scale that resources are not available to meet them.

The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Development has developed strong regional networks and is about to start up in Turkic-speaking areas of the former Soviet Union and in Africa through ADEA. The potential worldwide demand conceals major resource issues.

Ultimately, the political considerations remain central. Making the political case for ECCE involves emphasizing its productivist elements in order to make a convincing case for the allocation of resources, but this will inevitably influence the pedagogical elements. This was the case with the USA Headstart programme, which was linked to better performance at primary-school level, with definite consequences in terms of what the government and others expected its content and pedagogical methods to look like.

Organizing local support for learning

Kathy Bartlett

The Aga Khan Foundation's education programme supports efforts to increase the quality of programmes in both formal/non-formal education and in early childhood care/development. It also aims to increase access, completion and learning achievement rates in these areas.

The cornerstones for quality are:

- positive early learning opportunities at home and in the community;
- the extent of a school's readiness for children in the sense that it genuinely understands their needs;
- the provision of appropriate and effective training for the key actors, *all* those involved in running schools, from inspectors to parents;
- the extent of the inputs of both parents and communities as a whole into the learning process;
- the provision of continuous assessment and monitoring at all levels.

The Foundation aims to work with NGO and/or government resource bases, since they play a strategic role in improving quality across different educational settings by providing both in-service training/follow-up support to teachers, heads and others, and by ensuring active participation in education on the part of parents and communities at large. Follow-up support from the Foundation is a crucial element in this process.

An AKF project in Sind has developed a community-based continuous learning programme from pre-school directly into the primary level. It is based on a cluster of 12 communities (with more planned), using a holistic view of learning, starting with very young children. One central issue is what constitutes an effective resource centre, how far it is sensible to seek to increase the number of schools and how far it is better to work with community-based organizations that have developed their own schools and educational facilities.

In East Africa the Foundation is running the Madrasa programme which developed from AKF involvement in Kenya in the mid-1980s, when parents were seen to be worrying about their children's learning difficulties and their access to schools. AKF began to work closely with local people, including ECCE officers and community development officers. The introduction of the latter made a significant difference and began to raise questions of what is meant by community development — should parents really be involved to a significant extent in running schools? Today AKF has established 150 community pre-schools, and of these 38 have 'graduated' to forming local associations. The Madrasa Resource Centre staff provide training and support, and develop curricula and other materials for the community-run schools. The project has been highly creative about helping communities to maintain schools, and has set up community endowments for their maintenance, while beginning to define the modes by which parents and communities can express their involvement.

The Mombasa School Improvement Programme involves the Mombasa Municipality as well as the other players, and provides on-site follow-up support to teachers and heads, while strengthening the role and competences of existing tutors at teacher resource centres. It adapted the Madrasa programme's idea of involving the community development officer to create a professional team with accountability from each school to the research centre that serves it. The project has been instrumental in redefining the roles and responsibilities of the school and teacher resource centre management committees. The project has moved in numbers from 90 to 156 schools.

Features common to the two projects are that the community is involved in managing both pre-primary and primary schools, that local human, financial and material resources are identified and utilized to the fullest extent possible, that there is continuous attention to support systems that help to maintain and improve quality, that there is ongoing encouragement of sustainability, and that 'quality' is assessed in terms of learning, interactions and management.

Both programmes rest on quality teacher training and follow-up support, where training consists of theory, materials development and work on teaching methods. During and after their training teachers are able to draw regular support from mentor trainers as teachers begin to put their new knowledge into practice.

The critical factors for ensuring that schools are supported and that there is interaction between schools, parents and communities include financial transparency, the perceived relevance of services offered and the parents' confidence in the importance and relevance of their contributions. Given their natural diffidence in their importance to the life of the school, it is essential that parents are reassured that their contribution is significant.

Another important challenge lies in ensuring that the establishment of a network of teachers' resource centres implies a re-conceptualization and re-organization of existing networks of teacher training colleges and the inspectorate.

Further challenges lie in the problem of how to keep in touch with schools that have 'graduated' from the experimental stage, and the balance between the resources devoted to creating new schools and those provided for maintaining momentum among those that have graduated. Commitments also have to be made to keeping NGO trainer/staff skills up to date and ensuring that programmes are kept in tune with schools' and communities' changing needs.

The process requires the long-term maintenance of high levels of trust within communities, since community mobilization cannot be viewed as a one-off process. The sustaining of quality is an issue that needs to be planned-in from the start and not added later. Since good technical and managerial systems are required for the process, there must be ready access to ongoing school management training and follow-up assistance for headteachers. This culture of monitoring, collaboration and reflection *is* possible, but is time-consuming and requires leadership based on example.

Discussion

This approach to quality raises one important issue: the nature of 'going to scale' and how it is to be accomplished. The AKF projects that have been outlined above are relatively small in scope and the question is whether and how they should be taken to scale, and the extent to which the governments concerned are interested in supporting such a move, if only financially. Moreover, how do you go to scale at low cost and, given the need to concentrate on locale-specific changes, what is real potential for cost reduction when each community has specific and different needs? There is a conflict between this concept and the need significantly to increase non-salary costs in any efficient increase in scale. What the methodology shows up is the need to make quite small changes simultaneously across a wide area.

Where resource centres are concerned there is an issue of inequity since traditionally centres are almost invariably built at better-endowed schools; experience shows that the further you go from a teachers' resource centre, the less likely you are to benefit from its provision. Consequently, a sophisticated formative evaluation system is required to find out what the various stakeholders' interests are and how genuinely involved they are in the experience. This is distinctly difficult with the top-down approach adopted by many governments. Overall, there is a need to think at two levels at once, focusing both on the next step and on the longer-term strategy. Geographical location and the related issue of inequity can only be addressed on a long-term basis.

Indeed, the essential difference between this model and 'traditional' ones is that the resource centres go out to the schools and not *vice versa*, which is what usually happens. The AKF model represents a different type of community involvement, leading to a more cost-effective design where resource centres are concerned.

Recent experience in Ghana has shown that involving communities and positively supervising and supporting teachers at the same time, produces experiences that are contagious when local communities see things going well elsewhere. One important element is the strengthening of NGOs and similar organizations as mediating bodies. However, one point to arise from work in francophone West Africa shows that the state has a necessary role and must be involved in community schools, since communities find it difficult, if not impossible, to support a school of up to six teachers. The government also has the potential to act as a facilitator.

The question has to be asked whether community participation means: the full participation of members throughout the school, or simply in the classroom? In practice, community participation is usually developed and stimulated in rural areas, which simply means that once again it is the poor who end up paying more.

It would be naive to believe that community involvement is simply a technical rather than a political question. It is all too easy to see community involvement as a means of cost-sharing in the EFA process, when in reality the process is highly political, particularly where central governments are suspicious of reducing their power over education. Indeed, in most countries there is no legal or fiscal framework for doing this. The mind-set with which public-private involvement is approached is important. A further complication is that, where donors become involved, a partnership between donors and government tends to leave out the communities who should themselves be at the table.

Response and summing-up

The Aga Khan Foundation works both in very remote areas and in urban contexts and is trying to look at what the factors are that enable more teachers to get into the teacher resource centres. If headteachers' roles are largely administrative, then they are not focusing on the kind of instructional leadership that should be primarily occupying them. There is need for reflection on the respective roles and responsibilities of heads and teachers in schools: can ways be found of identifying certain key teachers in schools who can work with heads?

The Mombasa programme has raised questions about how teacher resource centres see their roles: can they learn and acquire some of the skills that the community development officer has gained? Can we include some of that experience in the training of teacher resource centre tutors? Instead of adding new staff, we should ask who already exists within the education system that can be provided with new skills?

On the question of going to scale, the Kampala project shows that costs did go down as it went to scale, though with the proviso that this was an urban project not necessarily typical of what would happen in a rural context.

The use of technologies for contact between teachers and resource centres, particularly radio, may well be helpful, but face-to-face contact is crucial to helping teachers through a new learning process: a mentor needs to go into the school and show a teacher how to do it; training is not just a question of providing cognitive learning. In addition, there is a need to think creatively about who are the potential mentors inside or outside the system. Experience shows that it is best to find someone in the community who can be the ongoing community officer, while for training it is not necessarily right to load further training on to a head, when one of the teachers could be creatively used as a support mechanism.

The role of information and knowledge management for quality improvement

Learning and knowledge sharing in education

Bruno Laporte

The World Bank has seen a significant shift in the ways in which it manages the huge banks of knowledge which it possesses. In the past its records were paper-based, and its knowledge tacitly deposited inside human memories. This was not conducive to what clients actually need: the production of relevant knowledge made available just at the right moment. Current work focuses on bringing together such factors as relevant best practice, most frequently asked questions and most common past mistakes, relevant country and sector data, economic and financial analyses, bibliographical reference materials, relevant policies, guidelines and procedures, the actual text of similar tasks and the experience of knowledgeable 'gurus' on key issues.

The task is to create thematic groups with staff learning on the job, undertaking research and learning from outside sources, using information technology as the support medium. This is designed to provide access for bank staff, clients and partners. The aim is a 'community of practice', bringing together a group of professionals sub-divided into thematic groups working together in pursuit of common problems, themselves embodying a store of knowledge.

To achieve this the Bank is creating a number of knowledge-management systems, using internet/intranet interactive facilities to allow staff to ask questions and get quick answers. This system, on which work began four years ago, involves 6 networks, 16 sectors, 120 thematic groups covering the six regions covered by the Bank. Configurations will include development statistics, a directory of expertise, space for dialogue, opportunities for external access, and a help desk. The idea is to improve the quality of programmes by codifying information on good practice with illustrations, lessons learned, and new ideas.

The system is organized in thematic groups, each encompassing an educational theme. Anyone looking at the intranet links should find a whole range of useful information on good practice and lessons learned, with key readings, ideas and examples, and a database of consultants, accompanied by a Who's Who.

The activities of the education knowledge-management system include:

- generating knowledge through analytical work;
- synthesizing existing knowledge;
- providing assistance to task teams;
- disseminating knowledge;
- answering queries through the Education Advisory Service (EAS).

The EAS is able to provide to clients, partners and staff information on access and equity in basic education, school health issues, early childhood, secondary, tertiary and adult outreach education, effective schools and teachers, education technology, education reform and management, the economics of education – all backed by education statistics and indicators. The EAS serves as the central hub of the education network and acts as the human face of the education knowledge management system by connecting people with experts, knowledge and information resources inside and outside the Bank and collaborating closely with the education task groups.

In an example from Nepal, Bank staff in-country sent a proposed educational plan to the group in Washington, who were able to respond with good examples from Turkey offering similar models and providing a very quick exchange of experience. Similarly, the education knowledge network in the Caribbean can connect policy-makers, administrators and teaching staff in thematic communities of practice to share experiences across internal and external boundaries.

The methodology is to improve the quality of education strategies and programmes through developing communities of practitioners, learning jointly with country governments and other partners, building capacity and broadening partnerships.

The Bank aims to capture and disseminate country-specific experiences and local knowledge across the Caribbean, bringing education professionals together to share information. This will enable countries to tap into global knowledge using reliable information including live databases and key-sector statistics and strengthening advisory services to support clients in their efforts to find solutions quickly. It is a means of capturing and disseminating systematically country-specific experiences and local knowledge, enlisting clients, partners and stakeholders to share knowledge and participate in global dialogue on education development, and bringing together the world's leading practitioners to exchange experiences and innovations in order to find joint solutions. One approach is to provide an activity room on the net where countries can post resources and share problems. This represents an effective way of working by enabling them to ask questions and share information and knowledge with each other. The bottom line is improved quality, speed, efficiency, innovation so that what used to take weeks to share knowledge, now can be done in days.

To sum up, this is not business as usual: it is a major attempt to learn from situations and share local knowledge by establishing a two-way learning process, using local culture and developing communities with partners, including the private sector. Such knowledge partnerships are critical for girls' education, HIV/AIDS, distance education, and a range of areas where shared knowledge is of great importance. Within countries there is often little learning shared between government and community and similarly, between external partners and countries. This represents a real shift in the development assistance paradigm. The next question relates to school networks and the global programmes of the Bank: are we ready to start speeding up this system of change and work in broader teams that cut across the existing patterns? Can we draw teachers themselves into the design of the project?

General discussion

The scheme is exciting and fascinating, but some observers experience considerable scepticism. Certainly the structure seems to be in place, but has there been an assessment of the results? What is the value added? Does it actually exist, or is it a promise of what is to come or what might come? If as well-enough developed as described, it could be a good tool for co-operation and development. But is it mainly directed at or likely in practice to be used only by World Bank staff and consultants?

At the moment many scholars find that they constantly go back to Bank papers for information, and there is therefore added value in keeping the institutional memory going, so long as it does not turn out to be used mainly by World Bank people (defeating the whole point of 'knowledge sharing'). The new global development gateway appears to have great potential, but will it be a superset of the knowledge management system outlined — in other words, the next logical step?

A related issue is that the World Bank, UNESCO, USAID, (through its household surveys and statistics), UNICEF, ADEA, and an almost endless list of other agencies hold similar information which they will no doubt want to develop into knowledge management systems. Unnecessary duplication is potentially very wasteful, and there is a strong need to pool resources. Nevertheless, there is a huge demand for information of the kind described, especially on consultancies, preparatory appraisal missions and similar detailed activities. The system is anticipated with considerable enthusiasm.

Some further questions are being raised also within the Bank. Was it right to assume that the knowledge management system would eliminate the need to continue to issue Bank policy papers, which have always drawn on a wide base of knowledge? And does the whole exercise not assume that people have unlimited amounts of time to spend on collecting material?

Furthermore, it might be correct that the Website is very popular and widely used: but what does this really mean? Are people going to be more efficient because they have more access to information? And are there not considerable dangers in putting material on a Website if staff have no time to go to the source documents behind the site? At the present moment one cannot approach the material with the knowledge that someone somewhere has properly synthesized it in an intelligent way.

One of the problems for those who feel uneasy at this development is that they may feel in danger of being seen as Luddites. It will be too easy to forget the crucial knowledge that exists within a country: documents, grey material, networks of people with understanding and insight — these are the true elements of knowledge. There is a real danger of over-emphasizing external information when the important thing is the extent to which networks can assist people within their countries to understand what needs to happen then and there. You can only test the value of what you are learning externally against internal knowledge of what is happening in your own country.

There is further concern that this model of knowledge management is cascaded from the top without much input from the field. Where is discussion within the Bank about how knowledge management happens at various levels and who is controlling the knowledge and moving it around? It should be remembered that simply disseminating the knowledge does not mean that it is being used.

Response and summing-up

The art is not about generating new information but about using existing material, including UNESCO and OECD statistics. The Bank will also use data from the field, as is the case in the Caribbean initiative for example. But the point to remember is that the Caribbean initiative has only just started, and is still an unknown quantity. Evaluation is planned but has only focused so far on internal use of the system. While it is true that some staff say they do not have time to use the system, the education statistics element is being used with substantial numbers of requests weekly. The real underlying question is whether the Bank is beginning to behave differently and whether it is no longer so inward looking and whether it is much more inclusive in its efforts to share knowledge. The real test will be in stage two, which will aim to develop communities of practice outside the Bank.

The role of evaluation research and assessment

Thomas Kellaghan

The perceived need for improving the quality of education is a worldwide phenomenon[5] in both OECD and developing countries. Three concerns can be identified:

- many students benefit little from their educational experiences;
- quality is perceived to be deteriorating as resources decrease and numbers increase;
- acquired competences may not be adequate for the twenty-first century global economy.

Today the emphasis in evaluation is no longer on inputs but rather on outcomes. The Jomtien Conference made the point that basic education is meaningful only if people acquire useful knowledge and that actual learning acquisition is more meaningful than enrolment and completion.

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[5] Kellaghan, T. (2000). "Using assessment to improve the quality of education". Educational Research Centre, St Patrick's College, Dublin, paper prepared for the IWGE, Florence, Italy.

Assessment procedures have accordingly become more important: they can test outcomes such as what a student is actually learning, or measure progress in an educational reform programme. A more controversial role for assessment is as a lever of change in improving the quality of education. Where it is used as a lever of change, the aim should be to ensure that assessment impacts in the classroom, where it matters most. There are in effect four areas of assessment:

- classroom based;
- assessment of schools;
- external (public examinations);
- national and international surveys of students' achievement.

While assessment is based on individual students, differences arise in the way individual data are aggregated and used.

Classroom-based assessment is potentially formative, occurring as it does during learning rather than afterwards. It is therefore surprising that relatively little is actually known about how teachers make assessments or use their knowledge to guide the learning process. Teachers use various types of evidence to assess the speed and quality of their students' learning, which vary according to curriculum area. The importance of an intuitive form of assessment like this is that it does not decontextualize knowledge and skills; on the other hand there are quality-control problems, including poorly focused questions or those that require predominantly factual knowledge or repetition. Since, however, this kind of assessment is most likely to achieve better student learning, improvement in the quality of such procedures should be a priority in the development of the assessment capacity of education systems.

The assessment of schools and even of individual teachers is frequently based on the performance of pupils, as in parts of the USA and the United Kingdom. Published performance tables in England and Wales are ranked according to the proportion of students reaching certain target levels. Schools are categorized according to particular circumstances so that comparative judgements can be made about their performances, with 'value added' judgements about students' academic achievements over a period of time. This can be seen as a less expensive way of achieving quality than approaches such as improving teacher education or reducing class size, depending as it does on rewards, some of a financial nature. The difficulty with this method is that it leads teachers to concentrate on meeting the perceived criteria, leading to a narrower curriculum and less flexible teaching methods.

External (public) examinations are a historic form of selection as students advance up the educational pyramid. In some countries the quality of the examinations is poor and they tend to ignore skills and knowledge that cannot be measured by simple paper-based tests, effectively leaving out the skills that would be of most use to students in their everyday lives. Again, this affects teaching methods, encouraging staff to concentrate their teaching on such matters as past papers, while if practical and oral methods are not used, these and other essential skills such as process, planning and perseverance are neglected.

Nevertheless, a number of commentators see positive advantages in properly set examinations as a means of raising academic standards. The arguments include the claim that examinations increase efficiency as a means of selection for higher levels of education and the belief that improved examination formats can have a beneficial effect on quality. Additionally, effective feedback to schools on the performance of students should lead to beneficial adjustments in instructional and learning processes. For example, in an experiment, a switch from purely verbal testing to practical tests for naval gunners led to greatly improved teaching without any formal change in curriculum or teaching methods. Nevertheless, external examinations tend to concentrate students' attention only on what is tested and to decontextualize knowledge.

National assessments and comparative international studies of achievement are in effect two related areas of assessment, rather than one. National assessment may produce statistics that are supposed to create an overview of a state system that is quantifiable against some criterion such as the performance of a comparable group or the same system at a different period. The UNESCO/UNICEF Monitoring Learning Achievement Project has initiated national assessments in some 50 countries, focusing on basic learning competences in literacy, numeracy and life skills. IIEP has also been involved in developing capacity for national assessments in Southern Africa, and there have been similar developments in the Caribbean and parts of Latin America.

Comparative studies of achievement have existed since the 1950s and have a research potential as well as policy implications. In theory, international data should have an impact on policy-makers and administrators, but there is limited information about how these groups and others make use of the data. Potentially, the three uses of data are:

- descriptive, providing information for a variety of publics interested in comparing education systems where the data may be used to support value judgements or provide politicians with touchstones for judging their own systems;
- monitoring, enabling observers to monitor whether or not standards are rising/falling;
- diagnosing problems in the education system via various possible approaches:

    1. Information can be collected on performance within sub-domains of knowledge such as fractions and proportionality within the discipline of mathematics. Information of this kind has led to curricular changes, notably in Ireland, Japan and New Zealand.

2. National and international studies of achievement can throw light on problems within systems, providing data on principles such as equity in gender, ethnic groups, or language medium.

3. Data on correlates of achievement collected via questionnaires can provide data on such matters as pupils' home background underlining, for example, the importance of home for scholastic progress (Hungary).

4. Accountability can be established, enabling a percentage success target to be set for an institution, region or country. In the United Kingdom and Chile, for example, information is available about all schools, which can then be held individually accountable for their performance.

Given the substantial investment in national and international assessments, there are several ways in which data from them can be improved. While the purpose of national examinations is selection, the use of computers can aggregate data (for example, on gender, ethnic background) for analysis leading to policy formation. It is essential that stakeholders be involved from the outset to ensure relevance to policy, and a national steering committee would be the best instrument for ensuring this. For classroom application a number of detailed analytical and communication issues need to be addressed.

The process of assessment in education is a complex one that does not offer a simple panacea. There are underlying questions about how assessment procedures are best designed and how the results can be used; these questions need to be asked in advance and they need to be skilfully targeted if quality at any level is to be improved.

Tony Davison

Recent studies by donors and lenders show a number of priorities that include a strong focus on the quality of teaching/learning, a desire to enhance participation for the poorest, an awareness that much more broadly conceived strategies are needed to replace subsectorally conceived projects, and a realization that policy-making requires greater evidence on which to base it.[6] The question is how far current approaches reflect these agendas.

Those involving evaluation only partially reflect the current priorities of donors and others. Analysis throws up quantitative techniques, qualitative ones, and a combination of the two, but with little interrelationship between them. The three functions that are required are: obtaining data on performance, making predictions about the future of the project/programme, and generalizing the findings to other situations.

This is illustrated by the textbook evaluation undertaken as part of the DFID-funded Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project, when the State Minister wanted evidence that investment in textbooks would confer measurable benefits. In a carefully controlled experiment using 52 schools, evidence showed that the experimental group (using new books) achieved learning gains of between 68 and 96 per cent higher than a control group of schools; there was also a 15 per cent gain for designated disadvantaged groups. The textbooks were subsequently introduced. Nevertheless, it can be argued that predictive value and external validity were not very high, partly because the focus was on *what* had been achieved, rather than on *how*.

Moreover, the evaluation did not provide specific lessons about such elements as classroom use of the textbook, its overall presentation and design, its relationship with other readers, the role of external consultants in the design process, or the institutional context (including concepts of what constitutes a good teacher) and how consistent any of these were with the textbook design.

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[6] Davison, A.J. (2000). "Enhancing the quality of education; implications for the design of project and programme evaluation", the British Council.

Lessons to be learned begin with conceiving of evaluation as a single system employing a blend of methods using a deliberate strategy to bring together data. A number of domains need to be identified and mapped so that programme managers can consider which research methods are required for each one and ensure that data are analyzed as part of a unified approach to a particular intervention.

It should be recognized that change is not necessarily predictable: in the case of the Indian study it is relevant to ask how far success may have been influenced by the fact that many teachers were calling for new textbooks because they needed something that fitted the new classroom techniques they were being encouraged to adopt.

Institutional evaluation needs to be central to analysis, since few evaluations in recent years have directed agencies to consider seriously the constraints and opportunities that institutional contexts impose on the individuals. We limit ourselves if we fail to examine the normative constraints imposed on individuals by institutions; teachers' behaviour on a training programme will relate closely to their conditioned notion of what a good teacher is. Evaluations need to examine the manner in which different stakeholder perceptions mutually influence one another.

Far greater synchronization is required between research and policy cycles. Many kinds of evidence need to be collected over successive academic years; much longer and more carefully pre-planned evaluation work that is independent of project or programme deadlines is required.

General discussion

Some donors agencies have been looking specifically at the interface between quantitative and qualitative evaluation/research and at the way in which they can be blended together to provide a genuine study of impact. DFID has recently run a workshop where a whole range of studies from different countries was examined on a formative basis. One important challenge is the setting up of national teams that understand that evaluation is an intrinsic part of the education system and not an optional add-on. Without effective evaluation techniques we cannot effectively pilot and develop programmes.

As sector programmes become more and more complex, it is increasingly important for all players to have a better grasp of the issues on the ground. Research is essential, so that those organizing educational interventions learn the context in which they are working. There is a high degree of arrogance in deciding that a particular local body must have decision-making power without this having been tested against criteria. The arrogance of ignorance is something that needs to be avoided.

It cannot always be assumed, however, that data when acquired will actually be used effectively at the local level. In Ghana, the chief examiner's report has used virtually the same wording for the past six years or so, which could be taken to mean that not much notice has been taken of the need to make recommended changes based on earlier reports. Neglect of clear evidence is one of the problems faced by reformers.

There is no question that if the examinations can be altered in the right way, it is possible to improve relevance. Often it is difficult to influence examinations because of the kind of security/secrecy surrounding them — the kind of thing that legally prevents setters from identifying themselves in some countries — but it would be right to say that in most circumstances, whatever the curriculum, it is the examination that is the *real* curriculum. Experience confirms that significant changes do indeed take place in the classroom if, for example, the use of stoves are introduced into domestic science examinations.

The abuse of assessment systems tends to be widespread, and those who are involved in the construction of the most sophisticated techniques are frequently the most sceptical. The creation of league tables in some countries, notably the United Kingdom, is highly suspect, if not nefarious, and the abuse of assessment systems is widespread. The testing and assessment programme in Ontario, Canada, is viewed as highly provocative as all teachers in the state are tested on their competency in assisting learning as part of the process of educational change. Given the obvious imperfections of present systems and their abuse, it is worth remembering that the creation of national and international test systems can imply huge costs for developing countries, whose budgets could easily be eaten up by them. There is also the danger that examinations that start as national assessments become a part of an international process as a basis for comparing results between countries, when in fact they were not designed for that purpose and are consequently inappropriate or even misleading.

Questions still remain whether, under certain circumstances, we should refuse to engage in construction of league tables and how far it is worth spending substantial sums of money on international comparative studies spread over the performance of people of some 40 or more countries.

Response and summing-up

There springs from all this a wide range of issues. Firstly, public examinations can contribute to the quality of education improvement. Changes to examinations can indeed have some effect in schools and contribute to improving the system, but there is a limit to how far such modifications will be effective. And the limiting effect of some forms of examination is well illustrated by a recent example in a Kenyan reception class studying religion, where the Ten Commandments were the subject of a multiple-choice question!

Secondly, there are real dangers, for example, where nationally set examinations are misleadingly used for international comparisons: since it is not usual to be able to obtain common curriculum materials across country borders, it is not feasible to make comparisons of examination results, despite claims that curriculum-free results across countries are achievable.

Finally, there is no question but that league tables cannot be fair. Even with the highly elaborate procedures used in Texas (USA) to factor in variables, it is not technically feasible to produce fair comparisons between institutions.

There are still many evaluations being undertaken where the design is not consistent with any model developed by a donor or lender. In one notable evaluation process in India, statistics were collected from a range of districts in order to obtain data; these statistics were then adopted at the request of a government minister to be used to isolate individual districts by performance, when this had not been the original or intended purpose of the data collection. A concentrated effort needs to be made to build a discourse with ministries of education as they grapple with the problems of research and evaluation.

Theme 3

Sector-wide approaches to education development assistance

Agneta Lind and Abby Ridell

There is widespread support and considerable political will for SWA among donors. Funding has to be long term and, as the methodology develops, support has to be given to democratic processes. A recent paper produced for Sida by a group of consultants[7] reviews the implications of the approach.

Some of the points made in the paper raise important issues, including the centrality of interdisciplinary work among agencies and much wider economic analyses than were used formerly for the project approach. Broader social, political and institutional analyses will be needed to place the proposed education developments within a wider context.

Among the changes that will be required within agencies will be the appointment of staff with different skills, including policy and negotiation. Greater collaboration and co-ordination will be needed between agencies, often with increased transaction costs. Interviews with Nordic donors indicate a variety of approaches, with SWA as a general central theme. Details of these interviews are available in the main paper, but in summary they are as follows:

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[7] Riddell, A. with Gustafsson, I. and Oksanen, R. "Implications for agencies of pursuing sector-wide approaches in education", prepared as a background paper for Sida for presentation at the IWGE, Florence.

- In respect of *policy development and the production of guidelines*:

DFID: from macroeconomic to sectoral focus; linked to wide internal consultation on international development targets, targeted strategy papers and country strategy papers;

Sida: wide internal consultation; linked to budgetary and balance-of-payments support and building on experience in education and health; guidelines being tested;

NORAD: ongoing review includes: from projects to programmes; country strategies; resource mobilization; geographical focus;

Ireland Aid: wide internal consultation, information dissemination; DAC review of the agency; production of education-sector guidelines;

Finland: positive in principle; attention given to adequacy of accountability and financial management systems; transparent assessment criteria to be developed, but no 'guidelines' as such;

Netherlands: part of overall policy change: focus on poverty reduction; reduced number of countries; sectoral approach; decentralized embassies; policy and guidelines imminent.

- Arrangements for *organization/management of SWAs*:

DFID: move from geographical to strategic posts in education division; new sectoral development advisers; some country development offices in addition to regional; ongoing management review of organization/skills mix;

Sida: recognized need for support function: established focal point; internal mail network; sectoral working groups; possible special task forces; key roles for embassies;

NORAD: task force reviewing procedures; establishment of help desk at headquarters under consideration; closer bilateral/multilateral co-ordination recognized;

Ireland Aid: small agency linkages between three sections;

Finland: strong involvement of consultancy companies now using flexible frameworks to follow up and participate in SWA processes; more collaboration required within agency and with auditors;

Netherlands: task force versus line management tension led to the establishment of a steering committee; consultations required with civil society.

- Requirements for *particular competences, training and development*:

DFID: new posts: sectoral development advisers; new competences; negotiation, communication, economic and wider development; annual education adviser retreats and short courses;

Sida: competences relation of education to broad objectives; negotiation; consensus-building; finance and accountability; development through seminars and participation in SWAs;

NORAD: learn from experience; need to broaden competences: focus on systems analysis; support from MOE;

Ireland Aid: new posts: local education advisers; informal training: annual retreats; require broader training: development, public expenditure, macroeconomics, public service reform, budgetary support. Some workshops to date; change in recruitment policies;

Finland: no change in staff recruitment, though more adviserssome training sessions: introduction to SWAs and economic and financial management;

78

participation in seminars; learning by doing; close co-operation with other agencies on training required;

Netherlands: new series of training modules; dialogue and discussion, revised job descriptions; emphasis on education system reform and linkage with poverty-reduction strategies.

- *The workload/transaction costs* are reckoned to be:

DFID: more manageable with new sector development adviser; ongoing work on transaction costs involved in SWA development;

Sida: more work than traditional project preparation;

Ireland Aid: more work at headquarters and in country; this should improve with new posts;

Finland: qualitative, not quantitative changes in workload; new expertise required — aid management, macroeconomics, and aid policy.

Netherlands and NORAD: no response under this head.

- *Information requirements* are:

DFID: wide consultation on different strategy papers; attention may need to be paid to information flow between political and development arms;

Sida: different information needs — strategic and policy issues and relationship of education to broader development; public information should focus on achievements within sector or system as a whole;

Ireland Aid: development co-operation the focus, not political issues; internal e-mail has helped flow of information; demands on education adviser;

Finland: increased need for management, administrative and organization information; increased volume of information especially on non-educational issues (e.g. economic and financial management);

Netherlands: country teams established to improve communication; Website established.

- Comments on *inter-agency contacts and collaboration* are:

DFID: variation in agency roles by country; collaboration could be formalized and reinforced by international-level dialogue; EC could be given greater co-ordinating role; dialogue could be strengthened; local staff require authority;

Sida: individually produced local variations of collaboration; need for harmonization of procedures — financial reporting, procurement, etc.;

Ireland Aid: use of each others' expertise could be more wide-ranging; collaboration on training possible;

Finland: SWAs have resulted in more frequent and closer co-operation; inadequate local staffing produces bottlenecks; joint capacity development welcome;

Netherlands: harmonization between agencies is key.

These summaries raise a number of issues for discussion, including:

- whether an institutional audit would be useful;
- whether there should be more formal dialogue and improvement of SWA forums;
- whether agencies should collaborate in professional development of staff;
- whether agency guidelines and timelines are a barrier to potential collaboration across agencies;

80

- whether an audit is required of in-country competences, information, dissemination;
- whether the EU should have a greater co-ordinating role;
- whether there should be feedback to headquarters or to a more formalized SWA forum on bilateral and multilateral performance in-country;
- whether a SWA Website should be created, or other forms of dissemination;
- through what review process harmonization of procedures might be formalized;
- what kind of inter-agency contacts are needed for collaboration?

From these points a number of key questions arise:

- the level of skills among local staff – are there economists on the ground competent to handle the new approach?
- do agreements made at headquarters level get communicated to local offices and ministries?
- are financial and procurement guidelines needed?

Adriaan Verspoor

There is widespread dissatisfaction with the project approach, which tends to create islands of excellence in a sea of failure.

The question is what is new about SWA? It certainly highlights connections with a country's macroeconomic framework, and the best HIPC programmes are those that result from a sector-wide approach. But most importantly, there is a clear linkage between analysis, policy, strategy, programmes, budgets and ultimate execution. Policy is, after all, an ongoing process rather than a one-off decision-making act. However, already the frontier is moving beyond simply a sector-development programme which, in effect, consists of a series of projects, towards consideration of the pooling of funds.

There are ways of accomplishing this:

- geographical targeting, as in India (where different agencies work with different states);
- allocation by cost category (as long as civil works are avoided);
- joint financing of eligible expenditure (where all donors are involved in all items on the basis of proportionality);
- amalgamated budget support (where donors place money in an education account to be drawn down as needed).

Cherry picking and 'quilting' as approaches emphatically do not work! However, SWA is so far an activity largely among bilateral agencies.

Most sector programmes give trouble: the theory is that money is channelled through the government system, which means that it is essential to look at such systems. Information frequently does not filter down. In addition, there is a need to stimulate innovation, as in India where each state has an innovations fund to enable NGOs to experiment and then have successful work taken to scale. So far donors have not been able fully to exploit flexibility, while until now conditionality has largely failed because it has always been impossible to make governments do what they do not want to do.

There are complaints that governments cannot cope with a whole range of donors when they all appear simultaneously. The Government of India provided a useful model when it said recently that it would gladly see donors on a six-monthly basis all together, at which session the government would define the studies required, rather than have studies imposed on it. Conversely, though the government may be in the driving seat, it must be open to donors to dismount if they want to.

General discussion

Some ministries may be simply unable or unwilling to cope with the new challenges. When we engage in an SWA, we are asking an MOE to get involved in producing a budget, accounting for it properly, auditing it, and then reporting adequately on its operation. The SWA process is making some of these issues very real for governments and forcing them to do things they did not do previously. Governments are presented with problems of co-ordination, which include coping with consultants arriving to assist them! Can ministry staff be trained in advance to cope with the new demands on them, or do they simply have to learn on the job?

In theory the interaction and co-ordination of the donors is supposed to be of assistance to governments in reducing the stress of dealing with a whole range of different agencies. In Nepal, for instance, donors have joined missions, with a pre-meeting in Copenhagen to try to sort out misunderstandings and difficulties. At this meeting donors try to reconcile their different requirements so that they can arrive together in the country with some degree of unity. While there are gains for agencies in respect of their procedures, technical competences, and related matters, serious thought has to be given to what the implications are for the countries and their governments.

Countries will find it difficult to interact on an equal footing with the agencies, if donors all get together in a united front. Much work needs to be done on working with ministries, actually spending time with ministers and their senior staff. Though the process has hardly started, there is considerable progress in some countries: in Mozambique a code of conduct has been drawn up for both partners and government, and the code's application will be reviewed as part of the overall monitoring process.

Donors and government need to look ahead together at the detailed requirements of any sector-development policy. In the past the reason that projects have failed is that they lacked a coherent analytical framework for policy. SWA offers such a framework, within which there can be individual instruments for intervention, such as a focused investment in one institution. Many such instruments should evolve from a properly thought-through SWA. The prerequisites for starting to fund a SWA are client stability, commitment by government to the collaborative process, and institutional capacity to develop and implement the sector programme once it has been agreed. The process will require a policy framework, financial parameters, institutional capacity analysis, monitoring and performance indicators, and a planned joint review. A procurement plan needs to have been worked out in detail before appraisal begins.

We need to remember that when we speak of SWAs we are intervening in a societal process that needs a lot of time to develop and the only learners are the actors in the countries themselves – a fact that has not been sufficiently appreciated. Log frames, achievement indicators, and similar instruments are all techniques practised by donors, but not necessarily by governments. There is therefore an urgent need for planning and dialogue at many levels and we need to know our limits in intervening in a country's development processes. All this assumes that SWAs will be with us for ever, which is in itself a questionable assumption, since changes in institutional culture may mean that they will not.

The European Union has sponsored a group of experts in education which has spent four years talking about education development programmes and their new directions. The EU does not use the term *SWA*, preferring the term *education support programmes*. Sectoral approach is now seen as closely connected with poverty reduction. Its advantage is that it creates a new set of dynamics amongst agencies. The concept of civil society is a starting-point. Civil society must be involved from the outset and continue through all stages of any SWA activity. Intersectoral competence is an essential ingredient, and every programme has to take account of experts across sectors.

Digby Swift One of the features of the Dakar Forum in April 2000 was a commitment "to ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation... of strategies for educational

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8. Swift, D. (2000). "Civil society and the sector-wide approach to education reform", paper presented to the IWGE, Florence.

development".[8] This is part of an increasing emphasis on sector-wide approaches (SWAs) and the role of civil society organizations (CSOs). There have been recent suggestions, however, that there is an inherent conflict between the sector-wide approach and the role of CSOs. The question is whether any exclusion of CSOs will be detrimental to the interests of the poor?

As a result of a consultation exercise conducted by DFID, a definition of civil society suggests that they are "the broad range of organizations in society which fall outside government and which are not primarily motivated by profit". Examples of CSOs include voluntary associations, women's groups, trades unions, community groups, chambers of commerce, farming and housing co-operatives, religious and tribal-based groups, cultural groups, sports associations, academic and research institutions, consumer groups, and others. A number of considerations need to be taken into account, including the need for NGOs to be explicitly included within the definition, that there is a case for regarding the media as part of the definition, and that by defining CSOs as a discrete sector, there is a danger of creating a separation that militates against an integrated and comprehensive approach. There is also the issue of whether CSOs such as school management committees begin *de facto* to become part of the government system.

CSOs have clear advantages in developing education-sector reforms. They can have an *advocacy role* in the sense that they can represent disadvantaged minorities and marginalized groups; they have a part to play in increasing *public awareness and engagement* by making the community aware of its potential for involvement, including encouraging parents to go into schools; they can provide *specialist knowledge and new ideas*, challenging orthodoxies and on occasion providing a viable alternative to poorly run government schools; they can help with *capacity building* through NGOs that have experience which is transferable to government structures; they can deliver services to *poor and marginalized people* by raising funds, labour and expertise for groups government finds it difficult to reach; they can provide *special services in crisis situations* following disasters.

In most countries the CSO base is considerably smaller than is desirable; it should also be remembered that not all CSOs benefit the poorest and weakest, and many represent vested interests or even élites. There is also the risk that many NGOs fail to create the structures to see that they represent those they are supposed to represent. Co-ordination is often poor between NGOs and there is frequently competition between them. There is also the danger of unnecessary duplication of government services which are already adequate.

The introduction of the sector-wide approach means that some CSOs will tend to be favoured and others weakened by increased government power in the sector. There will thus be winners and losers, with increased power given to certain pressure groups and taken away from others. Existing SWA programmes in Mozambique, Ethiopia, Zambia and Nepal show this to be the case, with the private sector mentioned as a significant player in some cases. In some cases there are statements of intent but no structures to back them up.

There is therefore a need to identify those CSOs that have been successful and can form a positive model for others and those that have the capacity to form effective partnerships with government by having their own school, providing funds for education, or improving the profile of education and stimulating demand for it. The role of trades unions, political associations, and ethical/religious groups with specific sensitivities needs to be carefully taken into account.

Other areas for further study include the role of CSOs in poverty reduction, strengthening the role of the community, increasing transparency and information-sharing, improving democratic structures in policy-making, resource allocation, innovation, advocacy, supervision, monitoring and evaluation. CSOs need improved accountability to their constituencies and

General discussion

access to partnership with agencies so that they can feed into strategic discussions between governments and aid agencies. The process is a complex one that avoids favouring certain NGOs at the expense of others and ensures that there is a wide involvement of government, CSOs and aid agencies in an atmosphere of mutual trust and co-operation.

There is a real danger arising from the involvement of CSOs with government under the umbrella of an SWA. In one or two cases CSOs that have done excellent work in the past on behalf of marginalized groups have switched allegiances and philosophies to become contractors to the government, reducing their ability to be the partners of the poor and disadvantaged. However, if you want governments to work with CSOs, can you really force them to do so. Is it realistic to think that this co-operation can be the subject of a whole raft of conditionalities?

The response to this dilemma lies in the questioning of a government about how it is going to take forward a particular initiative, and at which point the need for CSOs, including, for example, strong school management committees, is raised and discussed.

Practical issue 1

Training of agency staff

Françoise Caillods

The previous IWGE meeting at Feldafing expressed an interest in the training arrangements used by agencies for their in-house staff. As requested, the IIEP has conducted a survey of a total of 10 agencies, using a questionnaire. The results are contained in an IIEP paper produced for the IWGE meeting.[9]

An overview of the results shows that, while there is a growing consciousness of the need for training of agency staff, many agencies do not offer initial or in-service training for staff on any systematic basis; initial training is often limited in time and restricted to briefing sessions about agency procedures. Some agencies organize annual staff development seminars and others offer the possibility of attending existing courses at higher-education institutions such as universities.

Agency awareness of the need for more systematic training appears to arise from a realization that the fields of education and development co-operation are changing rapidly and that there is a need for continuous updating. Some agencies have undertaken regular training opportunities without necessarily making a systematic analysis of staff needs, and these include Sida's Annual Education Conference and the World Bank's Human Development week. Others, such as the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, send out a catalogue of possible courses to staff, while others run specific training courses, such as the World Bank Refresher Study programmes.

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[9] IIEP (2000). "Training of agency staff", paper prepared by the Secretariat for the IWGE meeting, Florence.

Training needs in terms of general knowledge and information about issues and strategies as identified by agencies are:

- In *education development:* education and poverty reduction, including education for disadvantaged groups; the learning environment and quality of education with particular reference to inputs, processes and outcomes; other areas mentioned are gender equity, training of teachers and trainers, early childhood care development, adult education, and information technology/distance learning.
- In *education management:* decentralized management of education systems, including school governance; and education financing and funding strategies and mechanisms; other areas mentioned are involving NGOs in education management, participatory management approaches, and institutional development.
- In *donor co-operation:* the main area is design and implementation of SWAs; other areas include the role of donors in education development and co-ordination between donors.

The scope for training needs in terms of technical know-how and skills is more limited, but includes:

- policy analysis;
- sector diagnosis;
- basic skills in statistics, cost analysis and budgetary procedures;
- educational planning;
- monitoring and evaluation of programmes;
- definition and measurement of educational achievement.

Training needs vary from agency to agency; in terms of categories of personnel, between professionals in advisory or management positions at headquarters or at regional/country levels, and those directly involved in the preparation of operational activities at field level.

Inter-agency training offers obvious advantages over that provided by a single organization, since it enables staff from different agencies to learn from each other and improves opportunities for donor co-ordination. If a pilot inter-agency scheme were to be developed as a result of this meeting, a number of key questions should be asked. Who is going to constitute the target group? For example, senior advisers working with managers of several agencies, along with senior staff from developing countries. Should course materials focus on one region or several? What would be the minimum number of participants and what would be the duration and location? Would it take place in Europe or in a region? Could a distance course be evolved as follow-up? What would be the language medium?

The joint training of agency staff alongside national staff would be a very fruitful exercise, since it would be a good way to develop a common understanding of others' perspectives and would enable those involved to develop real insights.

General discussion

The sectoral approach has much to do with supporting poorer countries and deciding how donors can move quickly and yet, at the same time, allow governments and their civil societies to work within their own time-frames. Capacity at all levels is a priority, and in particular senior managers working in recipient countries, but also agency staff need training. France is willing to commit sums next year to support training courses for personnel from both agencies and countries. One possible approach would be to give the training work to specified approved bodies that have status in the relevant fields. In the case of high-level personnel, training would need to be given near to where they work, with a second tier of training for lower-level staff conducted more flexibly in the most appropriate location.

One obvious approach would be to operate a training module related to SWA which would also be open to colleagues from developing countries. A successful example is that provided recently by Sida in Lusaka.

The model of training used by heads of statistical offices in Eastern Europe is an interesting one. They have set up an institute for training, or rather to co-ordinate training. In this instance, the training is provided by the agencies themselves using the different expertise of participating institutes. One institute acts as the advertiser and co-ordinator, and courses are reconvened a year apart while participants keep in touch in the meantime via e-mail. This is a low-cost operation because the agency running the training provides the facilities and the others support their own staff. One feature is that external evaluators are employed in order to assure quality control. The advantage of the whole scheme is that it helps to create linkages across institutes.

The FAO also offers interesting models for training. Of total staff costs, 1 per cent is are assigned as a matter of policy to every manager for staff development. There has been a re-evaluation of the organization's core competences and requirements, and managers realize that there is a need to adapt staff competences to meet the changing nature of the organization. Maintaining the technical skills of existing staff is a major challenge.

The World Bank has recently experimented with its course at the University of Sussex (UK) commissioned specially for World Bank staff. The course covers all operational staff for the Africa region, a total of some 45 people, including about 6-7 colleagues invited from other agencies. The programme, which is not cross-sectoral, has been designed around the provision of technical skills, and deals with such matters as cost and the financing of primary education, among others. Two weeks appears to be an ideal period. Because no single agency or comparable institution had the capacity to deliver a course of this kind and level, the campus location was chosen. Phase Two of the course will deal with issues in post-basic education, secondary, vocational and higher education. One question is whether or not it would have been a good idea to invite participants from partner countries?

The growth of interest in cross-cutting issues requires professional staff to look at relevant questions from outside of their familiar territory. At DFID training has brought together programme managers, economists and professionals to think through some of the new modalities. This represents a cheap, short, and communal approach to mutual training which does not have high costs and enables a group such as the education advisers to work outside of their immediate professional environment.

One challenge is that of identifying outside professionals who are available to be brought in to help think through key issues and to forecast new directions. Where appropriate DFID has brought in staff from the Overseas Development Institute in London. The department looks for opportunities to tap existing expertise, in many cases by bringing together professionals from different disciplines. Recently, for example, the DFID professional education staff and their social development colleagues met together in South Africa to look at HIV/AIDS. On other occasions they have talked through issues related to sector-side approaches. The underlying principle is to provide short sharp 'snaps' at relevant locations, sometimes using external facilitators.

At USAID there are training opportunities for staff, contractors, and various kinds of associate. One of USAID's practices is to provide core staff with off-site training by providing managers with a travel budget for this purpose. In alternate years the agency runs a large international conference involving at least 110 core staff, plus a community of some 300 related professionals. In addition there are on-site seminars about every three weeks and this September there will be a regional workshop for staff in Manila for staff in Asia. For the year 2001 USAID has a budget for a full conference which could include staff from other agencies. Distance training might well play a useful role in the process but with real field activity as the basis. Areas that might be covered would include educational planning.

UNICEF has two types of staff: international ones who rotate round different organizational postings, and those in country who are in need of wider perspectives. One consequence of the Dakar Forum has been more staff moving into education programmes. Up to 1995 UNICEF operated sector programme courses, but more recently training in institutional change has begun to develop. But what is really needed is a forward-looking menu with more anticipation of what will be the future themes in about five years' time. With hindsight, we can all say that there should have been training programmes dealing with HIV/AIDS at least five years ago.

One possible course might be built round the theme of programming for conditions of crisis. Given that there are now some 50 to 60 countries experiencing emergency situations in contrast to the handful some 10 years ago, there is obviously a need for training along these lines. Conflict prevention should also be seen in the context of SWA and cross-cutting issues, but with an emphasis on strengthening institutions in the South.

Training is a concept entirely consistent with developments within the EU programmes. It lies at the centre of Mr Prodi's recent reforms. One difficulty is the need to find out what kind of training you actually need. At present the EU operates two types of training: those general courses arising from Maastricht and more specific courses in development, such as economics, the use of the logframe, all of which are too short and not particularly suited to current needs.

Summing-up and response

It is clear that a varied supply of training opportunities exists and a clearing house is needed either through informal agency contacts or through a more formalized Website. Questions arise about costs and timing, but manifestly there is scope for organizing inter-agency training opportunities under auspices of IWGE.

Basically, the ideal training opportunity has to be brief, but have substance. Structure could include a formal curriculum content, plus opportunities for exchanges between participants. The IIEP could experiment by getting in touch with a handful of agencies to see whether something could be done within a region. It is still not clear whether it would be sensible to invite representatives of countries, or simply organize the training for agencies only.

Practical issue 2

Inter-agency groups and networks

Secretariat Note

A significant number of networks[10] involving donor agencies has developed over a number of years, starting with the IWGE itself in 1972-73. Others have been much more recent, with the majority established since 1995. This rapid recent development has undoubtedly grown from an awareness that information exchange is a necessary precondition for efficient co-operation. Indeed, a common denominator is the exchange of information and experiences, and many share the objective of effecting co-ordination at policy and/or action level.

The IWGE has evolved through a number of stages since its foundation, eventually adopting Basic Education as its major policy theme for long-term investment. It played an important catalytic role in the preparation of and follow-up to the Jomtien EFA Conference. Other networks have developed as either *networks of donor agencies* or networks in which *donor agencies play a prominent role.* IWGE members have collectively identified 13 agency networks which can be grouped into four categories.

The first of these – working groups established with the general aim of exchanging information and co-ordinating strategies – includes the *IWGE*, the *European Education Expert Group* and the *Nordic Agencies Meeting of Education Advisers.* The second – networks that concentrate on one level or type of education – includes the *Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development*, the *EFA Forum Steering Committee*, the *Follow-up Committee of the World Conference on Higher Education*, the *International*

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[10] IIEP (2000). "The IWGE and other agency networks", Note from the Secretariat.

Working Group on Secondary Education Reform, and the *Working Group for International Co-operation in Vocational and Technical Skills Development.*

The third grouping consists of the *Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)*, which focuses on one particular development region only. The fourth, which concentrates on specific problems in education development, includes the *Enabling Education Network*, the *Girls Education Working Group*, the *Inter-Agency Working Group on Education in Emergencies*, the *Global School Health Initiative*, and the *Inter-agency Working Group on School-based AIDS Education.*

Membership is varied between those involving only donor agencies and those which include other members, especially NGOs. ADEA illustrates well the kind of evolution which can take place, since it began as a donors' association, but broadened its base to include African ministers of education and later African professionals.

Mary Pigozzi

Networks have been operating for many decades, from the non-formal education network in the 1970s to ADEA to the more recent network concerned with girls' education. Networks have a range of roles: most focus on such areas as the sharing of information and knowledge, good practice, and other areas of common interest.

The current structuring of networks suggests that new ways of doing business are beginning to become apparent to users, though the process of working in new ways is inevitably slow as individuals and groups explore a new range of possibilities. But new institutional cultures mean that increasingly some networks are developing into mechanisms for change and new partnerships. Many are looking at improved resource utilization, and especially knowledge resources. There is a move, too, towards experimenting with new funding mechanisms, and ADEA is one good example, while the network dealing with the education of girls is another. The latter is in effect a pilot scheme providing a model for a new approach.

Many networks are also changing in terms of where the focus of their business lies. Both subject matter and the networking meetings that relate to it allow the focus to shift further away from capitals. Consequently, because of fresh locales, new communities of practitioners are appearing, widening partnerships as they develop. This in turn helps to bring up the complexity of the issues as they are encountered and assists members in coping with the pace of change.

Networks are broadly valued because they are usually informal and allow for frankness on the part of their members, who are able to share fears as well as successes. Thus they have great potential for changing the nature of the business in hand and for increasing members' effectiveness.

At the same time it needs to be remembered that networks are quite fragile because they are not institutions and can be short-lived. One advantage of their lack of institutional structure is that as soon as they are no longer needed they can be easily dissolved. Members usually understand that their network may not last for ever. Many are individualistic in origin and rely on specific people for their maintenance. Personal relationships are central to many.

One danger with any network is that it can become unfocused and lose its utility. It can also become too narrow in focus. Because of the essential informality of most networks, there is sometimes ambiguity over who actually is the member – the individual who participates or his/her institution? There are also accountability issues as well as concerns about duplication of subject matter and effort. In addition, there is evidence that some networks are stretching local capacity, especially where a particularly energetic individual is at the hub of several networks simultaneously. An ongoing issue is that of inclusion and exclusion and the concern to bring in new blood and avoid recycling old material.

One very good example of structured informality exists in the form of ADEA, which does not exist in the legal and physical sense other than as an office under IIEP's roof. When ADEA began its life, many of the sponsors asked what they would get for their money; what they in fact achieved was influence over policy setting and a range of key issues through close contacts with ministers. There are one or two other networks on the same model such as the Club du Sahel based in the OECD headquarters, and one concerned with water issues which is based with Sida.

Networks serve a variety of purposes about which we need to be clear. Some, for example, exist to influence political decision-making. For participants there are entry costs, but one great advantage is that exit is very easy. Financing is usually a problem and one function of a network must be to attract and persuade financiers to support it. It would be useful to have more data on the financing of networks and on how they build up their membership.

It would be important also to determine, in relation to the ADEA, what lessons can be learned from the way the agencies and the secretariat work together and what effect this has in the region itself. Clearly it is better to promote networking within the regions rather than increase secretariat costs.

The early childhood group has been very influential in its contacts with the World Bank and other donors. At the start many of its members became interested in joining it because they wanted to promote advocacy for ECCE. The EFA steering committee also was in effect a kind of networking group, and its work became more focused as the Dakar meeting approached and there was increased pressure to come up with ideas, actions and decisions. The group of Nordic agencies (including Ireland and the UK) is a very useful forum for its members. The meetings provide an opportunity to be creative and exchange views in an informal atmosphere and in ways that will ultimately help members to develop their own agencies.

In terms of function, networks are important for keeping professional associations up to date with new knowledge and techniques. From the point of view of staff, networks often change the way in which managers function, though this can have positive as well as negative aspects. Certainly, in many cases, the existence of a network means that managers can no longer operate in the same way as before. There are, however, tensions when staff want to involve themselves in networks when there are important organizational tasks to be done back at headquarters.

Indeed, in terms of costs, we tend to look at the explicit costs of networks, but forget the hidden economic overheads in terms of staff time involved. Sometimes a network will pride itself on saving money by having no secretariat, but then tie up a lot more invisible staff time on organization.

It is also important to have mediated networks: without quality assurance it is easy to circulate poor-quality information. Indeed, some of the networks currently operating might give managers cause for concern. Some, for example, are little more than lobbying groups which should be seeking to achieve their ends through existing forms of consultation. It is easy to be worried about the status of such groups, especially in terms of their authority to speak or act.

Networking has an important impact on SWA. When you work within a country, you quickly develop contacts with a small network of people within it. The new networking within countries is beginning to create a quite different environment where constant negotiations between different groups and partners have an impact on development co-operation. It needs to be recognized that donors and their partners are having to work in a quite new way.

Special session

HIV/AIDS and education

Stephen Matlin

The Commonwealth has begun to focus heavily on the AIDS problem.[11] At their recent meeting health ministers sent a message to heads of government asking them to recognize AIDS as a global emergency. This proposition has been accepted and pledges made to follow-up. Health ministers again met in Geneva recently and were told that the WHO is negotiating with pharmaceutical companies to get lower rates for anti-HIV drugs. This move has been criticized by ministers, on the grounds that even if drugs are reduced by 75 per cent they will still be out of the reach of the poorest. In any case it is not just a question of reducing the price of AIDS drugs, but of the whole package of remedies relating to the range of opportunistic diseases that relate to AIDS. There is a strong argument that AIDS is not simply a question of health but one of development.

The Commonwealth Secretariat currently convenes two ADEA groups, of which the teaching profession group is charged to combat AIDS in Africa. The issue is also becoming very important for many small states.

The stark facts are that 11 million children have already been orphaned by the disease, and of these 10.7 million are in sub-Saharan Africa. At the end of 1999 over 33 million adults and children were estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS, two-thirds of them in sub-Saharan Africa. Last year there were 5.6 million new infections of adults and children. Figures suggest that, of the total, 16 per cent were infected last year alone. The Caribbean area is accelerating towards African levels. Currently the fastest growth rates are for Africa and South Asia, Central Europe and the Pacific. Russia is on a path of constant growth towards an epidemic scenario, with a leap in cumulative infections from nearly zero in 1987 to over 14,000 in 1999.

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[11] Matlin, S. (2000). "HIV/AIDS and education — mobilizing action", Commonwealth Secretariat, London.

In 1999 there were estimated to be over 15,000 new infections a day globally, more than 95 per cent of these in developing countries; 1,600 were in children under 15 years of age. The majority – a total of 14,000 – were in people aged 15-49 years of age, of whom 40 per cent were women, and 50 per cent 15-24 year-olds. Life expectancies are in the process of reducing by as much as 20 years in some countries, notably Botswana and Zimbabwe, after having risen steadily until the beginning of the 1990s. Happily, in Uganda expectancy is beginning to rise again, though slowly.

Evidence suggests that in Thailand, where the situation was formerly very serious, there is a dramatic drop in sexual risk-taking and infection rates. A survey of 21-year-old men shows that between 1991 and 1995 the percentages who visited sex workers in the previous year dropped from nearly 60 per cent to just over 20 per cent, while those who had unprotected sex fell from 40 per cent to about 25 per cent. However, awareness alone does not necessarily reduce risk-taking behaviour, and other steps need to be taken in conjunction with public awareness schemes.

Many countries remain in a state of denial and/or are failing to record cases adequately. In one country there is an established 20 per cent infection rate, yet the prime minister and cabinet refuse to accept this to be the case. A major issue therefore is the acknowledgement that AIDS exists. Many ministers claim there is now political will, but this needs translating into action.

A multi-sectoral approach to AIDS requires that analysis, priority setting and planning take place across all sectors. All sectors must commit themselves to plan and make available resources for an integrated response to the epidemic.

This must include each sector planning its own activities to contribute to the national fight against AIDS, including an analysis of the factors contributing to spread the impact of the disease on its workforce and products, the consequences for both the sector and the community, and practical short-term interventions to protect workers and to cope with the skills shortages that will arise.

There is inevitably an HIV impact on education on both the supply and demand sides, and on quality. In some countries the volume of education is actually in the process of declining. On the supply side, teachers, administrators and finance personnel are being lost to the profession, while on the demand side deaths, infections, and the loss of parents combined with dire poverty are reducing numbers undergoing education. Sickness, absenteeism, demoralization, stress and stigma are taking their toll.

Education responses to HIV/AIDS suggest that it must be incorporated into education processes and not simply bolted on as an extra. First of all HIV/AIDS education must be located within a multi-sectoral response framed with a National AIDS Programme; the co-ordination between sectors is absolutely crucial, as is co-ordination between the actual actors within those sectors. The main response to date has been information/education programmes about AIDS, but it is now vital to combine these with broader sex education about adolescent sexual and reproductive health. *This must begin before sexual activity starts.*

Responses should therefore include teaching about life skills, peer education, culturally appropriate media, and methods that include participatory role-playing, practising behaviour change.

Priority objectives should include:

- protecting the lives of those not yet infected;

- optimizing the supply of trained educators and managers;
- sustaining the education of learners from affected families;
- adjusting the content of education to meet actual and expressed needs;
- sustaining and strengthening sector management capacity;
- mitigating the effects of HIV/AIDS on pupils through counselling, the learning of life skills, teacher training and support, distance learning.

The priority locations for action are governments and donors, civil society, the formal school sector, the non-formal education sector, universities and other tertiary institutions. At national level a National AIDS Commission is important. An education sector plan needs to be developed that includes HIV/AIDS awareness as an integral part of it.

But because formal education will suffer from the loss both of teachers and pupils (as pupils are deterred from attending by the need to provide for themselves and siblings after the loss of parents, or because of social stigma/exclusion), non-formal education needs to be developed. This should be done in ways that will provide opportunities for excluded children both by providing relevant education and by interfacing with formal schooling. Collaboration with NGOs and the private sector is desirable to mobilize action that can be used not only to support the school, but also to ensure that information is disseminated widely in the community with the aim of creating solidarity in combating HIV/AIDS and mitigating its effects.

Tertiary institutions are equally open to the impact of AIDS: on one South African campus 25 per cent of students are known to be infected, and this will eventually threaten the financial sustainability of an institution that has to pay out huge death benefits for staff, while simultaneously losing significant numbers of students. An example of a university network created to address HIV/AIDS is the Commonwealth Knowledge Network, established by the Association of Commonwealth Universities following an international seminar organized by the University of Natal in November 1999.

We need a first-aid kit for education and UNAIDS in May 2000 identified eight areas for priority action which include policy development and advocacy, AIDS curriculum reform, skills-based teacher training for AIDS education, counselling and health services, education system capacity building, resource mobilization for AIDS education, partnerships for AIDS and education, research and evaluation.

Sheldon Shaeffer The UNAIDS Inter-Agency Working Group on integrating HIV/AIDS prevention into schools has suggested a number of key strategies for helping AIDS-affected children.[12]

AIDS-affected children themselves need:

- psycho-social competences including resilience and self-esteem;
- emotional and psycho-social support;
- generic coping skills;
- help with learning;
- knowledge of their rights.

There are extra problems for this group of children, especially for girls, arising out of poverty and discrimination, learning difficulties caused by trauma and absence, the lack of any kind of 'permanency planning', feelings of stigmatization and loneliness, silent and unresolved grief, helplessness and hopelessness, often resulting in more risk-taking behaviours as their desperation increases.

Schools in heavily AIDS-affected areas have extra needs, including:

- an understanding of children's rights;
- the capacity to find, accept and reintegrate these children;

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[12] UNAIDS (2000). "HIV/AIDS and the Education Sector", paper prepared for the Fifteenth Meeting of the Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations, Provisional agenda, item 3, Rome, 8 April.

- an understanding of the emotional and psycho-social needs and special problems of AIDS-affected children;
- a tolerant, caring, and nurturing environment;
- knowledge of the availability of referral services.

Some of the solutions suggested for fulfilling the needs of AIDS-affected children and schools include:

- make the 'hidden' child visible;
- develop a counselling capacity in schools;
- train teachers and communities on rights, de-stigmatization, confidentiality; and the promoting of sports and therapy through art, music and theatre;
- support activities to build interaction and friendships within schools.

There is therefore a need to promote rights-based, child-friendly education systems, and schools should be supported in providing effective, inclusive, protective, and gender-sensitive services, especially for excluded groups such as AIDS-affected children. Essentially what works is a targeted, flexible, consistent, at times intensive, intersectoral, and co-ordinated approach.

AIDS is bound to have an impact on quality as an increasingly random standard of education is offered by affected institutions. The need for both teachers and adolescents to provide care, attend funerals, deal with absentees, and many other unforeseen problems will affect education at all levels. In addition, sufferers and their relatives can expect discrimination and exclusion. In many cases the parents of non-affected families want to exclude affected children. In many countries there has been no anticipatory planning and the impact of AIDS will not have been factored into education plans.

In terms of EFA, what policies (if any) exist at school level to deal with the harassment of pupils, with violence, drug usage, relationships between pupils and teachers, especially where girls are concerned? To what extent can schools contribute to AIDS education in the community? If there are interventions on AIDS, how far are they also concerned with a range of connected matters? Will, for example, the ministry of education have a policy in place to deal with the first teacher in the system who is identified as having AIDS? When this happens, will it know what it wants to do?

General discussion

For years AIDS was not mentioned in southern Africa until Kenneth Kaunda announced the death of his son. The fact is that we in agencies are tending to follow the same pattern, to continue to behave as if things are normal. For the past two years the World Bank has been talking about 'retro-fitting' projects, but one that has been retro-fitted to take account of assumptions about AIDS has yet to emerge.

Many schools in Africa are dysfunctional and such schools will not contribute to the fight against AIDS. On the contrary, they will tend to become even more dysfunctional than they are today; hoping, therefore, that something positive will happen without major and traumatic changes is an unreal dream. In Zambia, one educationist, Father Kelly, is asking for a complete rethink of the way education will be delivered in an AIDS-affected country. It is wrong, for example, to assume that children will show up regularly day after day, once they are affected. We need to look for alternatives. All this applies, as well, to early childhood education, which is also unlikely to continue as we know it today.

There are risks in talking about life skills and the curriculum as if they will really have an effect. Do they really reduce risky behaviour, and if they do, are there statistics that show this to be the case? The risks have to be looked at in terms of their effect on the wider society. About 100 million people are at risk of dying in rural areas because of the poor quality of food production. This will become worse because production will be affected by AIDS. Children are having to take over production, but do not have the physical strength or skills to do what their parents have traditionally done.

There is a great need to give life skills to children who cannot deal with traditional agriculture. Reading and writing are necessary skills, but life skills involving the practical application of knowledge to keeping alive are essential if we are to stop people from dying of hunger.

In fact there is a need for much better information about the numbers of teacher deaths. The ADEA working group on the teaching profession says very little about the impact of AIDS on teachers, nor do MOE statistics mention the disease, and we know little about rates of absenteeism due to it. Some recent studies show that the number of pupils is declining faster than the number of teachers, which is not what earlier observers expected. Many AIDS studies are conducted at local level and their results are not widely known; there is a need to collect and synthesize these local studies. South Africa produced a good AIDS plan five years ago, but it has not been implemented; it may be that the government has no management capacity to implement it, or perhaps it has little awareness of the scale of the problem or its importance.

There is the strongest need for evidence-based policy instead of simple statistical monitoring. The latter provides only part of a picture, and if we really begin to accept the scenarios that were painted earlier, we should seek real hard information. At the moment there is too little understanding of the picture, which has to be interpreted as well as monitored.

In Botswana death by AIDS is never put on a death certificate, but witchcraft is frequently cited as an alternative. This amounts to total denial by virtually the whole of the population. There are also important cultural misunderstandings that need to be confronted, including the widespread belief on the part of men that they can get rid of AIDS by having sex with a virgin. Attention also needs to be given to the higher prevalence of AIDS among all educated groups in Africa, which will have a real impact on management. At the current moment the Zambian Government is being devastated by the disease. NORAD is interested in using Zambia as a model for a major intervention in AIDS education and is seeking a practical pilot within the framework of the proposed sector programme.

There will be clear advantages in getting research down to district level. In many places people at district level want to act, but await authorization from government to do so. They need official encouragement, some money, perhaps a vehicle, and in many cases they know exactly what they want to do. Flexibility within existing frameworks is needed to take account of small-scale initiatives of this kind.

Ten years ago no one believed that things would get as bad in Africa as they have. We are still using western models to deal with African situations and there is a greater requirement for awareness that we are dealing with different cultural models and conditions in which western approaches just do not work. Models based on large amounts of training and intensive work are not relevant in crisis nations where there is a need for new and innovative models. New approaches and new services have to be developed, with people at local level taught to do things themselves. In-depth co-ordination needs reinterpretation both within and between agencies.

A future key priority in UNESCO will be inclusive education, though a small section of the Organization will be devoted to it. It should in fact be promoted as a major theme to follow on from Dakar. 'Inclusive' has a wider connotation than simply AIDS, since it applies to all those who are excluded, including the disabled and handicapped and those affected by AIDS.

Response and summing-up

We have to give priority to considering how loss of productivity from the system is going to be addressed. Ways have to be found of mitigating its impact on the rest of society and for this every sector needs to have its own plan to address the AIDS problem. Problems then need to be identified cross-sectorally.

In response to the question whether or not information in itself changes sexual activity and risk-taking, the Thai situation indicates that risk-taking is dropping significantly, though of course there is a time lag before infection levels drop. We also need to remind ourselves that we are not talking about just an African problem, since the epidemic is spreading very rapidly in the Caribbean, Russia, and parts of Asia. A strong evidence base as outlined above is needed.

With respect to relationships between teachers and students, some countries do have policies, but it is not known whether these are effective. Nothing is known about how far teachers are disciplined for the sexual harassment of pupils, or whether their training includes AIDS issues.

A good clearing house of AIDS education materials should be established; at the moment there is nowhere staff can go to look for AIDS-related materials. It would be helpful if a high-level EFA group could take over responsibility for pursuing these issues. It would be instructive to see whether there are any examples of where the SWA process meshes with AIDS issues.

The impact of life-skills materials is unlikely to appear early because of the long-term nature of the infection rate. If work had been done earlier, some of the impact could be mitigated. The opportunity still exists in Asia. There is a danger of making all discussion too Africa-centred and lessons can be learned from emergency situations of other kinds elsewhere.

In terms of statistics, there is a strong need for firm figures, but there is no point in waiting for them, if only because AIDS is routinely not recorded as a cause of death and because the crisis requires urgent measures.

On the success story – Uganda – the high-level presidential support was very important in carrying through the activities. The approach was multi-sectoral. In Thailand it was the Ministry of Defence that intervened to get public awareness strengthened. The technique of getting each line ministry to see AIDS as its problem is an important development.

But there are disappointing aspects to the problem. At the EFA meeting in Johannesburg the francophone report on emerging difficulties made no reference whatever to AIDS and the anglophone report was not much better. If action is not taken quickly, the impact of the AIDS epidemic might be so great that reforms will become impossible. Father Kelly could be right in saying that in 10 years' time, school systems may no longer exist as we know them.

Conclusions and recommendations

Suggestions for future topics and themes synthesized from the general discussion

A range of likely topics at once suggests itself, deriving from subjects initiated at the June 2000 meeting. Overriding issues include progress on EFA and generic topics such as the relationships between donors and their partners:

- *Education for All*: the follow-up to the Dakar Forum, perhaps looking at specific aspects of EFA follow-up. One important aspect of this would be the needs of young people, especially those in rural areas.

- *Sector-wide approaches*: a further, complementary, study designed to include as many agencies as possible, with a more in-depth and practical focus. One possible area might be a focus on how co-ordination is taking place in the field. One specific area of interest could be SWAs and the networks that relate to them.

- *Adolescence*: how education for this crucial period of development beyond the secondary-school level is being provided, with an examination of life skills, livelihood skills and the increased risks that young people face in the new environments confronting them.

- *HIV/AIDS*: exclusion and inclusion have emerged as key topics, not only in relation to AIDS itself, but more generically. There is a case for examining practical ways of addressing exclusion in terms of inclusion. If continuity between meetings is desirable, this is one topic that could be pursued in advance of the next session. HIV/AIDS has emerged as a major topic.

- *Inclusion*: perhaps this should be tackled as a topic in its own right, taking an enlarged view of it. EFA will only become a reality if we deal with all those who are marginalized.

- *Intersectoral concerns*: there has been considerable interest in the place of education in relation to other sectors.

- *Natural disasters*: there could be a case for a wide-ranging discussion of this area in relation to education.

- *Rural young people*: it could be argued that agencies devote too few resources to informal and non-formal education to meet needs of young people, particularly those who have dropped out of education. The focus of the discussion would be on drop-outs, and the rural constituency.

- *The quality of learning*: a substantive topic has been the quality of learning, and attention has focused on the digital divide. The implications of this need to be explored. The uses of technology and distance education could provide a focus, or discussion could centre on the theme of teachers, who they are and how they are recruited and trained (though it should be remembered that the IBE has already held two major sessions on teachers).

- *Debt relief:* discussion would be useful on the question of whether substantial sums of sectoral money will become available under this initiative and what kind of co-ordination is needed. A sub-issue might be the question of governance in the decentralization of education.

- *Breakdown of management systems:* it may be that views of management are oversimplified. It would be interesting, for example, to look at pressure on the headteacher as a key point in the system and at models of school management more generally.

Timing, membership and nature of future meetings

The 18-month sequence seems generally satisfactory for most members. There is a case, however, for fewer topics with more time and depth spent on each. Two major topics might be suitable, one a substantive educational issue and one relating to aspects of donor co-ordination. The organizing committee should more rigorously exclude additional topics as they emerge.

Of all the existing networks, the IWGE is probably the most informal, and there is considerable value in keeping it that way. In terms of content, it is worth preserving the rich agenda that has characterized the present meeting. One of the best functions of the IWGE is its ability to keep its members up to date on the *current* important topics. There might therefore be a case for preserving flexibility and deciding nearer the time of the meeting what should be the main issues to be covered.

It is important for some members at least to be able to render an account of the meeting to their agency on return. Co-ordination is a good generic topic for persuading agencies that the session is worth while. Exchange of information, especially at an informal level, is the key.

The question of the location of a future meeting is left open.

Appendix A
List of participants

I. Multilateral agencies and institutions

Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)
Mr Richard SACK
Executive Secretary

Commonwealth Secretariat
Mr Stephen MATLIN
Director, Human Resource Development Division

European Community (EC)
Mr Javier PANIAGUA
Directorate General for Development

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
Ms Lavinia GASPERINI
Senior Officer, Agricultural Education, Extension, Education and Communication Service

Mr Douglas SMITH
Chief, Staff Development and Recruitment Branch

IIEP
Mr Gudmund HERNES
Director

Ms Françoise CAILLODS
Co-ordinator of Decentralized Activities

Mr Gabriel CARRON
IIEP Consultant

Mr Roger IREDALE
IIEP Consultant

UNESCO
Mr J. HALLAK
ADG/ED a.i., Education Sector

Ms A. BAH DIALLO
Director, Division of Basic Education, Education Sector

Ms Soo-Hyang CHOI
Chief, Early Childhood and Family, Education Unit

UNICEF
Mr Sheldon SHAEFFER
Chief, Education Section, Programme Division

Ms Mary Joy PIGOZZI
Senior Education Advisor, Education Section, Programme Division

Ms Elaine FURNISS
Senior Education Advisor, Education Section, Programme Division

World Bank (IBRD)
Mr Bruno A. LAPORTE
Sector Manager, Human Development Network, Education

Mr Adriaan VERSPOOR
Lead Education Specialist, Human Development - Africa Region

World Health Organization (WHO)
Mr Charles BOELEN
Coordinator, Human Resources for Health

II. Bilateral agencies and foundations

Aga Khan Foundation
Mr Jeremy GREENLAND
Director of Education Programmes

Ms Kathy BARTLETT
Education Programme Officer

AUSTRIA
Ms Lydia SAADAT
Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Development Co-operation

Ms Atiye ZAUNER
Austrian Foundation for Development Research

CANADA
Ms Marilyn BLAESER
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Senior Education Advisor

DENMARK
Mr Knud MORTENSEN
Danish International Development Authority (DANIDA)
Senior Technical Adviser, Education

FINLAND
Mr Heikki KOKKALA
Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Education Adviser

FRANCE
Mr Lucien COUSIN
Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Chef, Division de la coopération éducative

Mr François COLAS
Agence française de développement, Directeur, Département des Projets Sociaux

Mr Jacques MARCHAND
Agence française de développement, Département des Projets Sociaux

GERMANY
Mr Wolfgang GMELIN
German Foundation for International Development (DSE)
Deputy Director, Centre for Education, Science and Documentation

Mr Hubert HARTMANN
German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ)
Basic Education Specialist, Division Education, Science, Youth

IRELAND
Ms Liz HIGGINS
Department of Foreign Affairs
Education Adviser, Technical Support Unit, Development Co-operation Division

Mr Thomas KELLAGHAN
Educational Research Centre, St Patrick's College

JAPAN
Ms Yumiko YOKOZEKI
JICA Ghana, Science, Technology and Mathematics Programme

Mr Shinichi ISHIHARA
Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA)

Mr Akira YOSHIKAWA
Deputy Permanent Delegate, Permanent Delegation of Japan to UNESCO

NETHERLANDS
Mr Theo OLTHETEN
Netherlands Organization for International Co-operation in Higher Education (NUFFIC)
Department of Educational Studies and Consultancy (DESC)

NORWAY
Ms Ellen Marie SKAFLESTAD
Norwegian Agency of Development Co-operation (NORAD)
Technical Department

SWEDEN
Ms Agneta LIND
Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida), Head of Education Division

Mr Kenth WICKMANN
Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida), Senior Programme Officer

Ms Abby RIDDELL
Sida Consultant

UNITED KINGDOM
Mr Tony DAVISON
The British Council

Mr Steve PACKER
Department for International Development (DFID)
Deputy Head (Professional), Education Department

Ms Carew TREFFGARNE
Department for International Development (DFID), Senior Education Adviser

Mr Digby SWIFT
Department for International Development (DFID), Senior Education Adviser

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Ms Emily VARGAS-BARON
United States Agency for International Development
Deputy Assistant Administrator, Director, Centre for Human Capacity Development

III. Observers

Ms Denise LIEVESLEY
Director, Institute of Statistics

Appendix B
Detailed programme of sessions

Wednesday, 14 June **Chairperson**

08.45-09.15

Official opening by Gudmund Hernes (IIEP)
Word of welcome by John Micklewright
(UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre)

09.15-10.30

Theme 1: Recent trends in education aid policies and practices

S. Shaeffer

- Introductory statement by Gabriel Carron (IWGE Secretariat)
- General discussion and 'show and tell'

10.30-11.00 *Break*

11.00-12.30

General discussion and 'show and tell' (continued)

12.30-14.15 *Lunch*

14.15-15.45

Theme 2: Improving the quality of learning

A. Verspoor

a. *What makes quality of learning?*
  - Panel composed of Elaine Furniss (UNICEF), Emily Vargas-Baron (USAID)
  - General discussion

15.45-16.15 *Break*

16.15-17.00

b. Quality and early childhood development
- Introductory presentation by Soo-Hyang Choi (UNESCO)
- General discussion

17.15-18.00	Bus transfer to the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre
18.00-19.00	Visit of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre
19.00	Reception offered by UNICEF
22.00	Bus transfer to hotel

Thursday, 15 June

08.45-09.45

c. Organizing local support for learning W. Gmelin
- Introductory presentation by Kathy Bartlett (Aga Khan Foundation)
- General discussion

09.45-10.30

d. The role of information and knowledge management for quality improvement E. Vargas-Baron

d(i) Learning and knowledge sharing in education
- Presentation by Bruno Laporte (World Bank)
- General discussion

10.30-11.00 *Break*

11.00-12.30

d(ii) The role of evaluation research and assessment

- Panel composed of Tony Davison (British Council) and Tom Kellaghan (Ireland)
- General discussion

12.30-14.00 Lunch

14.00-16.00

Theme 3: Sector-wide approach to education development assistance J. Greenland

- Panel composed of Agneta Lind (Sida), Abby Riddell (Consultant), Adriaan Verspoor (World Bank) and Digby Swift (DFID)
- General discussion

16.00-16.30 Break

16.30-17.45

Practical issue 1: Training of agency staff A. Lind

- Introductory statement by Françoise Caillods (IWGE Secretariat)
- Discussion

17.45-18.00 Break

18.00

Evening session: Follow-up of EFA Forum 2000 W. Gmelin

- Introductory statement by J. Hallak (UNESCO)

Friday, 16 June

09.00-10.30

Special session: *HIV/AIDS and education* A. Bah Diallo

- Panel composed of Stephen Matlin (Commonwealth Secretariat) and Sheldon Shaeffer (Inter-Agency Group on AIDS and Education)

10.30-11.00 Break

11.00-12.00

Practical issue 2: Inter-agency groups and networks G. Hernes

- Introductory statement by Mary Pigozzi (UNICEF)
- Discussion

12.00-13.00 Conclusions and proposals for further action of the group

13.00 Lunch

Appendix C
List of papers produced for the IWGE meeting

Davison, A.J. 2000. "Enhancing the quality of education; implications for the design of project and programme evaluation", the British Council.

IWGE. 2000. "Training of agency staff", paper prepared by the Secretariat for the IWGE meeting, Florence.

IWGE Secretariat. 2000. "The IWGE and other agency networks".

Kellaghan, T. 2000. "Using assessment to improve the quality of education", Educational Research Centre, St Patrick's College, Dublin, paper prepared for the IWGE, Florence, Italy.

Matlin, S. 2000. "HIV/AIDS and education – mobilizing action", Commonwealth Secretariat, London.

Riddell, A. with Gustafsson, I. and Oksanen, R. 2000. "Implications for agencies of pursuing sector-wide approaches in education", prepared as a background paper for Sida for presentation at the IWGE, Florence.

Soo-Hyang, Choi. 2000. "Early childhood care and education: the foundation for quality learning", paper produced for the IWGE, Florence, Italy.

Swift, D. 2000. Civil society and the sector-wide approach to education reform, paper presented to the IWGE, Florence.

UNAIDS. 2000. "HIV/AIDS and the Education Sector", paper prepared for the Fifteenth Meeting of the Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations, Provisional agenda item 3, Rome, 8 April.

UNICEF. 2000. "Defining quality", paper presented by UNICEF at the IWGE meeting, Florence, Italy.

Vargas-Baron, E. 2000. "Strategies for improving learning in an imperfect world", paper presented to the IWGE, Florence Italy.

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128

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